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Laotian quicksand

Recent fighting on the Laotian Plain of Jars has all the ingredients for another Vietnam: North Vietnamese regulars; their protégés, the Pathet Lao; the Royal Laotian Army; CIA support, and United States advisers.

As Republican Senator Charles McC. Mathias Jr. of Maryland said, Laos has become an arena for the repetition of the mistakes of America's Vietnamese involvement.

Hopefully, this will not happen. President Nixon should make good his promise to withdraw *militarily* from Southeast Asia. His country got itself involved, by degrees, in Vietnam and the result has been a moral, political and military disaster.

And the people of Southeast Asia, particularly the Laotians and Vietnamese, would probably much better be left alone. They have been pawns in big power chess

games—played by Moscow, Peking, Hanoi, and Washington—far too long.

War has been a way of life for most of the inhabitants of the former French Indochina: Japanese occupation during World War II; return of the French; war between the French Foreign Legion and nationalistic-communistic guerrilla units, and finally in the '50s, American involvement.

Peace is unlikely to come to these hapless people until all outside powers withdraw their military hardware and political influence. The people in that part of the world must be allowed to determine their own destiny, the strong communistic nationalistic bias notwithstanding. It's chancy at best that others will not interfere, but they most assuredly will if the U.S. is involved supporting a regime which cannot support itself.

STATOTHR

GREENSBORO, N.C.
NEWS

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FEB 28 1970

Non-involvement

The answer sought by U. S. senators to their questions about American involvement in Laos, following a battlefield catastrophe for government forces there and the attendant statement of the U. S. ambassador there that he has "lost any interest in helping out the press whatsoever" in reporting it, is easy.

Laos is a non-war; the U. S. is accordingly pursuing a policy of non-involvement in it. Small wonder if the ambassador is non-interested. The senators would know, if they did their homework, that in President Nixon's 119-page "state of the world" message to Congress February 18 Laos was non-mentioned. Just as in the recent budget message, the cost of the war in Vietnam was non-mentioned, although it does not follow that it has suddenly become a non-cost.

Laos is, as you might guess, a non-country formed with a great deal of imagination and ingenious use of maps out of one of the old provinces of French Indochina, which became a non-country 16 years ago. Laos is politically non-aligned as a result of the accord negotiated with the

Russians by Ambassador Harriman in 1962, which envisioned a three-way coalition between three royal princes — one non-Western, the other non-Communist, and the third non-everything (otherwise known as neutralist). The accords, as you might expect, are non-functioning.

What bother U.S. senators about the U.S. policy of non-involvement in Laos are persistent rumors of non-identified activities by the CIA in the northern part of the country. The U. S. embassy in Vientiane, the Laotian capital, boasts no fewer than 72 military attaches, and the senators naturally wonder what non-activities they are there for. There are persistent rumors also that the U.S. pays the bill and maps strategy for a so-called "clandestine army" of 30,000 men somewhere in Laos, but then if you are supporting a policy of non-involvement in a non-war in a non-aligned non-country, a clandestine army is the thing to support if you cannot find a non-army. ✓

What does it all mean? President Nixon, to no one's great surprise, is non-saying. ✗

U.S. suffers big defeat in Laos

By Richard E. Ward

In the face of an offensive by Pathet Lao liberation armed forces, troops of the Royal Laotian army and mercenary forces of Gen. Vang Pao hastily retreated from and abandoned the strategic Plain of Jars in central Laos on Feb. 21, leaving behind large quantities of U.S.-furnished equipment, including field artillery pieces and a helicopter.

Only a few days earlier, Prince Souvanna Phouma, head of the Royal government, said that Vientiane's troops would stay on the plain down to the last man.

The liberation armed forces were victorious despite several weeks of U.S. bombing, as intense as ever carried out in Vietnam. On Feb. 18, all the U.S. B-52s normally used against South Vietnam were diverted for attacks against Pathet Lao positions on the Plain of Jars. Some 75 of the giant, eight-engined, Thailand-based bombers participated in these raids. The U.S. has been using a smaller number of the bombers in the daily raids against both Laos and South Vietnam. Also, a large number of the U.S. jet fighter-bombers based in Thailand, South Vietnam and on aircraft carriers took part in the stepped up bombing in Laos.

A correspondent of the Paris daily Le Monde, reporting from Vientiane, Laos, estimates that the U.S. has been flying 20,000 sorties per month in Laos. This was just before the battle for the Plain of Jars, named for large urns, relics of an ancient civilization, that lay scattered about the plain. According to Richard Dudson, writing in the Dec. 23 St. Louis Post Dispatch, U.S. air strikes in Laos increased from 1000 to 4000 per month between January and September 1969.

CIA supervises U.S. intervention

Under the supervision of the CIA, the U.S. is deepening its involvement in a secret, undeclared war in Laos, a landlocked nation about the size of Britain, bounded by People's China, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, South Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Burma. The U.S. completely finances, equips and directs the armed forces of the Royal Laotian government whose seat is in Vientiane and the army of Gen. Vang Pao, which various estimates number at between 17,000 and 35,000 men, whose headquarters is at Long Cheng, about 35 miles southwest of the Plain of Jars. Gen. Pao's army is the creation of the CIA, whose Laotian command post is also at Long Cheng.

Resisting the U.S. intervention is the Pathet Lao, the commonly accepted designation for the Neo Lao Hak Sat, which is Laotian for the Patriotic Front of Laos. The Pathet Lao is led by Prince Souphanouvong, the half-brother of Souvanna Phouma.

In 1962, when right-wing Laotian forces were retreating on all fronts there was a cease-fire and the Pathet Lao agreed to the formation of a government of national union. But this plan was sabotaged by the U.S.

and in retrospect, it is evident that the U.S. used the cease-fire to reconstitute the shattered Royal army and to establish Gen. Pao's mercenary forces.

Following progressive harassment, the neutralists and leftists were eliminated from the Vientiane government in a right-wing military coup in April 1964. Souvanna Phouma was also ousted, but was permitted to return to his post after agreeing to follow U.S. policy. From all evidence the Prince has not been an unwilling accomplice of the U.S. Souvanna Phouma, pretending to be still the neutralist he once was, has consistently denied the true extent of U.S. intervention, even after certain "secret" U.S. activities have been exposed in the press. Like U.S. spokesmen, Souvanna Phouma claims that U.S. military assistance is merely directed against North Vietnamese in Laos. Actually, the U.S. bombers are used to support rightist troops and against the liberated zones, with the intention of terrorizing the populace supporting the Pathet Lao. Because of U.S. bombing, it is estimated that at least a third of the 2.5 million Laotians have been forced to flee their villages.

U.S. aided French war

U.S. intervention in Laos goes back to the end of World War II. Between 1945 and July 1954, when the Geneva agreements on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were concluded, the U.S. aided the French effort to reconquer its former Laotian colony, which declared its independence in 1945. The Geneva settlement brought no peace because the U.S. has been attempting to impose its own domination over Laos since 1954.

After the 1954 Geneva conference, the Pathet Lao was willing to cooperate with a Vientiane government of a neutralist character, in accord with the Geneva agreements. But the U.S. has never been willing to accept neutralism in Laos, strategic for U.S. expansionist aims in Southeast Asia, and it has tried to destroy the Pathet Lao, which is comprised of neutralist and left forces, including the Laotian Revolutionary Party.

Despite a steady U.S. escalation, the Pathet Lao, once down to a single battalion, has resisted the combined strength of the U.S. and the right-wing Laotian armed forces and has grown to the point where it now controls two-thirds of the country, a development testifying to the Pathet Lao's wide popular support.

Following a series of Pathet Lao victories last year, including the capture of Muong Suoi, just west of the Plain of Jars, morale of Gen. Vang Pao's mercenaries was sagging. The U.S. sharply stepped up its air attacks as a "warning" to the Pathet Lao and to provide Pao with a "victory." During the escalation, the Pathet Lao faded away from the Plain of Jars and Pao got his "victory" last September.

Problems for Washington

Now that the Pathet Lao has retaken the plain while it was under bombardment of unprecedented intensity in Laotian fighting, Pao's success last year is revealed in its true light. These events demonstrate that "Vietnamization" has not worked in Laos, despite the scores of CIA bases and U.S. Army Special Forces units supporting and "advising" the Laotians. When put to the test, the CIA's mercenaries are no match for the Pathet Lao. The recent defeat on the Plain of Jars, which is really a U.S. defeat, poses serious problems for Washington, which claims that it is withdrawing from Vietnam and that it will not get into a new war in Asia.

Air power alone cannot contain the advance of the Laotian Liberation forces and now Washington must decide whether it is going to step up its unacknowledged ground activities as well. Officially, Washington maintains it is merely helping the Royal government against a North Vietnamese invasion. This shabby tale tries to

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continued

MIAMI, FLA.
HERALD

M - 375,469

S - 468,167

FEB 28 1970

North Viets Advance On Laos Strongholds

By Herald Wire Services

VIENTIANE, Laos — North Vietnamese troops have advanced to within nine miles of Long Cheng, one of the government's last two strongholds west of the Plain of Jars, reports reaching Vientiane said Friday.

A North Vietnamese battalion was reported still on the move toward the town, which is headquarters for Gen. Vang Pao's 10,000-man army of Meo tribesmen, and toward Sam Thong, an air supply base for northern Laos.

Sources said Vang's men, supplied and financed by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, had taken up defensive positions in preparation for an attack.

ALONG LAOS, border with Thailand, reliable sources said, North Vietnamese troops have pulled back after suffering casualties of about 200 dead in fighting with Laotian forces.

The fighting centered near Paksane, just across the Mekong River from Thailand and 70 miles northwest of Vientiane, Laotian casualties were not disclosed.

About a regiment of North Vietnamese soldiers moved into the area after capturing the Plain of Jars from government forces on Feb. 21, the sources said. They reported that the North Vietnamese apparently withdrew from the region about three days ago.

SOURCES IN Vientiane said Premier Prince Souvanna Phouma is expected to send letters on North Vietnamese military action to the Soviet and British ambassadors asking for a meeting of the 14-nation Geneva confer-

ence, which established Laos, independence and neutrality in 1962. Britain and the Soviet Union are the conference cochairmen.

In Washington, meanwhile, Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D., W. Va.), a firm supporter of administration policies in Vietnam, said Friday he questioned the wisdom of "laying American lives on the line in Laos."

BYRD ADDED his name to a growing list of senators demanding to know the exact extent of U.S. involvement in the defense of Laotian government troops.

"An estimated 100 American pilots have been lost in bombing missions over Laos and at least 25 other Americans have been killed in the fighting there," Byrd said. "Before these casualty figures rise further the American people should be told the extent of our country's involvement in Laos."

He said that a full scale entry into the Laotian conflict by American troops "could serve to open up a new front in the Vietnam war."

Sen. Frank E. Moss (D., Utah) said in a statement, "Once again we seem to be heading down the same tragic road of escalation. Once again, the American govern-

ment seems to be trying to hide from the American people the extent of our involvement there."

MOSS CALLED for a "Laotianization" of the war. "If the war in Vietnam can be Vietnamized, then this same process should begin in Laos before it becomes any more difficult," he said.

In Minneapolis, Sen. Walter F. Mondale (D., Minn.) said the role of U.S. military advisers in Laos duplicates early U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war and may be violating a congressional resolution.

Mondale criticized government secrecy on Laos and said a refusal to disclose the American commitment "could easily back us into another war."

MONDALE TOLD the Minnesota Newspaper Association convention that U.S.-paid advisers are training thousands of Laotian tribesmen.

"It may well be that there are a great number of armed forces personnel on loan to the CIA, bearing arms but in civilian clothes, doing very much what our advisers did in Vietnam," Mondale said.

A resolution adopted by Congress last year prohibits the use of American combat troops in Laos but may be being circumvented, Mondale said.

Insist Troops Won't Be Ordered to Laos

By JAMES WIEGHART

Washington, Feb. 27 (NEWS Bureau)—The United States has no intention of committing ground troops to defend Laos even if Communist forces threaten to overrun the country, high American officials said today.

The officials, who cannot be named, said limited support of beleaguered royal Laotian forces will continue to be provided by concentrated B-52 bombing raids and through the clandestine "advisory" services performed by American military attaches and Counter-Intelligence Agency men.

But the official insisted that the administration has ruled out sending in combat troops to stem the onslaught of Laotian Communist and North Vietnamese army units.

Concede Worry Over Reds

These officials conceded that President Nixon's State and Defense Department advisers are "very concerned" over the current Communist offensive, which has already routed royal Laotian forces from the Plain of Jars and which threatens areas to the south and southwest.

The President's advisers still don't know if the Communist offensive is a bid to take over the entire country or merely a seasonal operation to recoup territory lost to royal Laotian troops last fall, the officials said.

But, they added, American experts on Southeast Asia agree that the Communists have the military power to take over Laos at any time, and that American intervention, in such an event, would not be worth the high cost of defending the land-locked nation.

Protective, Laird Insists

Meanwhile, administration leaders continued to shy away from a detailed public account of U.S. activity in Laos. Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird said all U.S. military activity there is directly related to a "policy of protective reaction" against North Vietnamese threats to American forces in South Vietnam.

Laird insisted that U.S. bombing raids in Laos were aimed at interdicting North Vietnamese supplies moving through Laos on

route to South Vietnam. However, the Plain of Jars, where recent B-52 raids were centered, is far north of the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Administration sources privately admit this inconsistency. But they point out too that for Laird to state publicly that the raids were being made to help the royal Laotian forces would be an open admission that the U.S. is violating the 1962 Geneva accords.

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WASHINGTON FOOT

28 Feb 1970

STATOTHR

U.S. Action in Laos Scored in Senate

Senate Foreign Relations Committee members privy to the secret U.S. operations in Laos intimated yesterday that the current Communist retaking of the Plain of Jars is the inevitable result of the U.S.-assisted Royal Lao government offensive there last fall.

Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.), chairman of a subcommittee looking into U.S. commitments abroad, explained to the Senate yesterday that he has been unable to persuade the administration to release secret committee testimony on what's going on in Laos.

Symington said he had decided, therefore, to put into the Congressional Record, with his blessing of authenticity, an article by T. D. Allman, a reporter for the Bangkok Post.

Allman's article, written last September, said that "following U.S.-Laotian planning sessions" that month at the secret Long Cehng base, "U.S. bombers, gunships, helicopters, light aircraft and Laotian soldiers" swept into the lightly defended Plain of Jars for the first time in five years and retook it from the Communists. **Prediction Borne Out**

Symington then underlined two paragraphs of Allman's article for particular attention by the Senate:

"With the offensive, U.S. policy of restricted bombing in northeast Laos and, more importantly, the policy of restraining the Laotian government forces from over-extending themselves, largely went by the board. . .

"Few non-Laotian Vientiane observers expect these major and unexpected victories to last. As soon as the Communists can regroup, most observers feel they will sweep back onto the Plain and reverse their losses along Route 9."

To this, Symington added: "Sadly, his prediction appears to be borne out by recent events."

Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.), another committee member familiar with secret administration testimony before Symington's subcommittee, said he shared Symington's concern.

An unexpected participant in yesterday's debate was Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-W. Va.) who, until now, has been associated with the Vietnam "hawks."

Byrd called on the administration to give the public the facts. He noted that an estimated 100 U.S. pilots have been lost in bombing missions over Laos and at least 25 other Americans have been killed in the fighting there.

"Before these casualty figures rise further, the American people should be told the extent of our country's involvement in Laos," Byrd said.

Meanwhile, the Defense and State Departments corrected what they said were misinterpretations of remarks Thursday by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird.

The Defense Department acknowledged indirectly that U.S. tactics in Laos may have changed in recent months despite Laird's statement that "there has been no basic change as far as the U.S. policy in Laos is concerned over the past three or four years."

Asked whether Laird's statement meant that the United States has not stepped up its combat activities in Laos, Pentagon spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim told newsmen: "He was talking about policy, not tactics. You have a basic policy and you carry it out as best you can."

Friedheim and State Department spokesman Carl Bartch both disputed Laird's remark Thursday that the United States may have "ad-

visers" in Laos. The Geneva Agreement on Laos prohibits the stationing of foreign troops or military advisers there.

Friedheim and Bartch said in separate news briefings that any American military personnel stationed in Laos are classified as "attaches" rather than advisers.

But neither would divulge the current number of U.S. attaches—unofficially estimated to be more than 1,000. "I am not authorized," Bartch said. Asked who had directed him not to answer, he said, "my many superiors." Friedheim said simply, "I can't discuss Laos on background or on any other kind of ground."

NEW AREA THREATENED

Reds Push Drive in Laos

STATOTHR

By TAMMY ARBUCKLE

Special to The Star

VIENTIANE — The capture of Long Chien, headquarters of the Laotian government forces in northeast Laos, could introduce a new element into the war in Laos.

When the 1962 Geneva Accords were signed, Long Chien was under government control. If the Communists take it, they would hold, for the first time, territory not on their side of the agreed cease-fire line.

U.S. Embassy officials here still are hoping Hanoi will restrain itself to "limited ambitions." By this they mean Hanoi's restricting itself only to taking back areas held in 1962.

To date the Communists have only claimed territory on their side of the cease-fire line. But yesterday, a North Vietnamese battalion was reported to be moving to the rear of Long Chien and Sam Thong, and Lao military sources said they expected Communists to attack the two outposts.

At least 50 Americans are reported to be based at the two sites.

Lao military said the North Vietnamese were moving down along the Nam Nhiep River east of Long Chien.

The North Vietnamese move takes them around the flank of a new defense line set up by Meo Gen. Vang Pao, head of the U.S.-supported "clandestine army" in Laos.

The left flank is protected by troops headed by Gen. Kouprasith Abhay at the Sala Phou Khoun crossroads — the junction of Routes 13 and 7.

Hanoi forces have moved around the right flank near Route 4, Lao military sources said.

A reporter visited Sam Thong earlier this week and saw preparations being made for a Communist attack.

American medics were digging a bunker near the hospital while other men filled sandbags.

The Americans' living quarters was sandbagged against a rocket attack.

A notice in the Sam Thong mess hall informed Americans where rifles were in case of need.

The Americans in Sam Thong sleep in their clothes, and have escape routes prepared.

Edgar (Pop) Buell says he has run from the Communists 19 times in the past 10 years.

The Americans at Sam Thong are all AID workers engaged in school building and running dispensaries in the hill country. There also are three U.S. "military attaches" there.

Long Chien is Vang Pao's headquarters 12 miles east of Sam Thong.

There reportedly are more than 50 Americans at Long Chien. According to reporters who have been there, this includes American crews of Jolly Green Giants, mechanics and armorers for bombers and AC 47 gunships, CIA ground operatives advising guerrilla units, and CIA communication specialists who monitor Hanoi's radio traffic.

Military experts say Hanoi wants to knock out Vang Pao's forces, which have been a thorn in their side for eight years.

Vang Pao's guerrilla actions against Communist supply lines, combined with Hanoi's preoccupation with South Vietnam, have forced the Communists to withdraw from large portions of Laos since 1962.

Intelligence sources say Hanoi is using a 1,000-truck shuttle service to rush supplies to

its forces, which recaptured the Plain of Jars this week.

HANOI LOSES LAOS OUTPOST

VIENTIANE (UPI) — North Vietnamese troops captured and then gave up a hilltop Laotian government outpost nine miles from the U.S. support base at Sam Thong in fighting reported today.

Military sources said the Communist troops drove out the 10 to 20 government defenders early yesterday but then retreated later in the day as Laotian government troops moved in to counterattack.

The U.S. Ambassador in Vientiane, G. McMurtrie Goldley, went to Saigon for a meeting yesterday with the American commanders in Vietnam and the commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, Adm. John S. McCain. He returned today.

Goldley's aides described the meeting in Saigon as "routine" but could not recall when the last one was held.

CHICAGO, ILL.
NEWS

E - 461,357

FEB 27 1970

One Vietnam is too many

Maryland's Republican Sen. Charles Mathias Jr. is sure-as-shooting right that the American people will not stand still for a policy that gets us out of Vietnam but leaves us caught up in an equally messy and open-ended war in Laos.

And Illinois' Sen. Charles Percy is equally right in asking for an end to the secrecy that has hidden the nature and extent of U.S. involvement in Laos.

What is certain is that, for all the CIA cloak-and-dagger work and the military's massive "adviser" program and the pouring of endless U.S. treasure into what Carl Rowan calls that "little landlocked piece of real estate," we once more have the Communists about where they want us. And it is terribly late in the season for another such mess.

But with all of this said, it is quite another thing to figure where Mr. Nixon can go from here. One reason, of course, is that the American people have not been told where we stand now.

Our involvement in Laos is nothing new; we have been mucking around in that "Idaho-size country" with our CIA agents and our Green Berets and "civilian" advisers and our millions about as long as we have been in South Vietnam, and as long as eight years ago we pulled out 666 "advisers" under the Geneva agreement. The North Vietnamese pulled out 40 and we suspected, with plenty of cause, that they were cheating. Since then we have used Laos airfields to harass the Communists in Vietnam and the Communists have used Laos as an avenue into South Vietnam, while Prince Souvanna Phouma with the help of both Thailand and the United States has fought back at the

Vietnam-backed Laos Communists who are eternally trying to do him in. What else has been going on is largely speculative.

The Thai participation is not exactly altruistic. In fact it almost seems as though the dominos are still lined up across Southeast Asia much as they were a decade ago, all waiting to tumble at the Reds' nudge, unless the United States can head it off.

Yet if that is the case (and there are of course major differences between then and now) the President of the United States has far fewer options now than 10 years ago.

The angry voices on both sides of the congressional aisle represent angry millions and tens of millions across the country crying, "Stop!"

In spite of certain qualifications that Mr. Nixon originally placed on his de-escalation decision, we believe at this point in history that decision is irreversible. The United States has borne nearly a third of a million casualties in Southeast Asia; it will not take another such decade of frustration and sacrifice. Whatever risks may be involved in maintaining the pace of the pullout — and there are cruel risks — they cannot match the perils of indefinite bogdown in a futile war. The commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, Adm. McCain, may be utterly right in declaring Laos "critically important to the free Asian countries' efforts to withstand the Communist aggressive campaign."

What has also become clear in 10 years is that either the Southeast Asians, themselves, must care enough to halt that aggression, or face the fact that neither the United States nor anyone else can save them.

CHICAGO, ILL.
SUN-TIMES

M - 545,570

S - 712,175 FEB 27 1970

Where are we going in Laos?

On Feb. 17 we said on this page that something odd was going on in Laos. In the past 10 days the situation there has grown in gravity. There is every indication that the U.S. military involvement in Laos has escalated considerably and there is fear that another Vietnam may be in the making.

Sen Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.) has joined the growing group of senators to express his concern — and that of his Illinois constituents — about the Laos situation. Percy said, "There is a grave concern in the country as to where we are going."

There is little information coming from Laos to determine where the United States is going. Two American reporters who visited a secret base in Laos reported that U.S. bombers were taking off at the rate of one a minute, apparently to bomb Communist troops in the battle for the Plain of Jars, in northeastern Laos, which the Communists won when Laotian troops deserted in the face of enemy fire. The two reporters were arrested by the Laotian government and taken out of the area. Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) has asked that G. McMurtie Godley, the U.S. ambassador to Laos, be called home to tell Congress about Laos and to explain the difficulties reported by the press in getting at the facts.

A number of senators are charging

the administration with a deliberate coverup in Laos. Sen. Charles McC. Mathias Jr. (R-Md.) says that hundreds of former Green Beret troops have been recruited by the CIA and are engaged in clandestine operations in Laos. Mathias asks, "Can the reservation of war powers to the Congress be circumvented by redesignating soldiers as agents of the CIA or as military advisers?"

This question and all the others raised about Laos deserve an answer. President Nixon has said repeatedly that he does not want another Vietnam. He has pledged a decreasing U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia. In his recent State of the World message the President made it plain that the United States would expect other nations to take on their own burdens of defense.

The situation in Laos appears as if the administration was paying only lip service to those objectives. Further refusal by the administration to answer the questions about Laos could create a credibility gap — not only at home but abroad — that would rival that under which President Johnson's administration suffered. Sen. Percy and all the other senators who are disturbed about Laos should continue to press even more strongly for a full airing about what is happening in Laos.

CLEVELAND, OHIO
PRESS

E - 393,191

FEB 27 1970

Eaton Sees North Vietnamese, Says They Blame CIA for Laos

By JOE COLLIER

After meeting with the North Vietnamese delegation at the Paris peace talks yesterday and today, Cleveland industrialist Cyrus Eaton said the North Vietnamese believe the U. S. plans a major, CIA-inspired war effort in Laos.

Reached at his Paris hotel, Eaton told The Press this is the interpretation North Vietnamese take of the current U. S. bombing in Laos' Plain of Jars region.

Eaton also said the bombing, in the minds of the North Vietnam delegation, was planned by the Central Intelligence Agency as a prelude to five or six years of war in Laos.

"These men tell me that they are keeping close track of the White House, the State Department and the Pentagon and have concluded that the CIA has unduly influenced all of them in the war in Laos which has expanded in the last few days," Eaton said.

"THEY AND THE ambassadors from other countries stationed in Laos, whom I visited in December, all believe the new Laos war has been planned by the

U. S. for several years.

"They feel that only the House and the Senate, which control the purse strings, can return the U. S. to sanity in Southeast Asian policy."

Eaton, traveling with an aide, Norman Comisky, entertained six members of the North Vietnamese delegation to dinner last night and five members of the Revolutionary Front at his quarters in the Ritz.

"I AM CONVINCED," Eaton said in a telephone conversation, "that Hanoi is firm in its two fundamental pre-conditions for ending the war in South Vietnam.

"I am sure Hanoi wants peace. But delegates insist that the U. S. must first announce a timetable for withdrawal of forces, and that the Saigon Government must be expanded to include all political elements of the South Vietnamese people.

"They say withdrawal of forces by the U. S. can be flexible and extend to six months or a year or 18 months.

"All people I have talked with say that Hanoi will never retreat from those two pre-conditions to peace."

S2616

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

February 27, 1970

ruptive confrontation, I concluded that the power to act on the spot should not be stifled; but that in spite of all the risks of Monday morning quarterbacking on the faculty, the President should submit his actions to review and should, if necessary, make the issue one of confidence. If he were to receive a vote of no confidence, he should offer to resign. This conclusion is implicit in the "Dear John" letter of April 1969, in which I tried to spell out our thinking about the protection of dissent and the prevention of disruption.

The principle of executive accountability as the price which must be paid for the exercise of executive discretion has, up to now, been formally limited to the power of the trustees to fire the man they hired as President. This is a terribly limited and inhibited power, since it cannot be exercised without running contrary to the expectation of a lifetime tenure. There is no objective occasion or event which invites the appraisal. Even the most decorous and covert effort to remove an unsatisfactory president is at best a matter of intense personal anguish to everyone concerned.

Since it is likely to be resorted to only after deep rumblings of widespread dissatisfaction have been voiced in several quarters, the chances of concealing the reasons for premature retirement are very slight. If the malaise has erupted into rude, crude, and unattractive challenge, then of course the trustees are likely to get their defensive backs up, just to prove that they cannot be pushed around and that the institution will not be governed by mob rule. So, the worse the disease, the harder the cure.

The essence of the problem is that, while there is legal accountability to the trustees, there is no orderly way in which those most significantly affected by maladministration can invoke trustee action within a measurable time, without open challenge to the stability of the institution and the integrity of its processes.

It seems to me that the only way this problem can be solved is to require the periodic, explicit renewal of a president's tenure. I happen to think that ten or twelve years or so is about enough anyway, although there is no generalization valid for all times and places and people. More important than the length of average term, however, is the need for some shorter interval which permits periodic reassessment as a matter of course, without waiting for or requiring invidious or disruptive public complaint. Unless there is some such arrangement, the hope for genuine accountability at all levels of authority is illusory.

I think Yale would be better off if it were understood that the trustees would make a systematic reappraisal and explicit consideration of the President's reappointment at some specified interval. This might be seven years after the initial appointment, perhaps at a somewhat shorter interval thereafter. I would urge the trustees right now to consider adoption of such a policy. This would mean a termination of my present appointment a year from June and an explicit judgment about the wisdom of my reappointment by that time. Under present circumstances the effect would be to make the office more attractive not only for initial appointment but also for continuation in it.

Of course the trustees could not, and should not, abdicate their ultimate responsibility for the exercise of their best judgment about the best interests of the institution. Occasions have arisen, and may well rise again, where defiance of popular student and faculty opinion is in fact justified by an issue of principle, just as may be the defiance of alumni or public opinion. Reservation of this duty and right, however, does not justify insulation of either the President or the trustees from a periodic, systematic assessment of what student and faculty opinion is.

Such accountability from top to bottom of the institution would require startlingly new measures for full disclosure of the meetings at which decisions were taken; and unorthodox revision of the terms of presidential appointment. Disturbing as they may seem from the perspective of inherited tradition, I would urge with great conviction that they would be far more consistent with the nature of a free academic community, and the administrative leadership it requires, than would the sharing of faculty and administrative responsibility for academic and institutional policies.

If such real accountability were achieved then I have no doubt whatsoever that consultation would become regular, widespread, and serious. This should include formal as well as informal participation, including elected groups where appropriate. No one with any sense, let alone pride and ambition, could fail to take seriously the importance of adequate consultation with those to whom he would in fact be held accountable at periodic intervals. Sometimes the processes of consultation will be best served by an elective process; sometimes it will best be done by trying deliberately to impanel a group with a greater variety of interests and viewpoints than would probably emerge from majority vote. Also there are mixed solutions, relying in part on ballot, in part on administrative selection. Most important there should be no exclusive channel of communication or opinion, nor any requirement that all consultation should be formal.

If it were limited for the most part to consultative arrangements, "legitimacy" might lose some of its rigidity. Even if ultimate responsibility should lie with the full-time faculty and administration, subject only to review by the trustees, consultative participation is both good education for the participants but essential if the institution is to be alert to its own needs in a fast changing society.

I make these somewhat radical proposals because while I do respect and share the dissatisfaction with a governance which seems free to ignore the will of the governed, I think that the sharing of faculty and administrative power with students on a widely dispersed democratic basis would be a disaster for our kind of academic institution. So I urge much more strenuous examination of techniques of accountability. They would be more fitting for University governance than would techniques for the sharing of ultimate responsibility with the transient student constituency. In order to further serious consideration of these possibilities, I submit the concrete proposals concerning disclosure and the terms of presidential appointment as worthy of consideration. Much more thought and inquiry is in order before such notions could harden into concrete proposals. They seem to me, however, to point in a direction far more promising than expecting actual direction of University affairs to come from a participatory democracy in which only a minority would participate, a representative democracy which would be unlikely to be truly representative, and the substitution of a legislative power for what are inherently executive responsibilities.

U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN LAOS

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. President, the concern over our apparent increasing involvement in Laos is growing daily. Last week it was reported that B-52's are dropping bombs in northern Laos very close to the Chinese border. This week new reports are claiming that ex-Green Berets, allegedly CIA employees, are being used in Laos. The question raised

by these undenied events are very important and answers to these questions should be provided to both the Congress and the American public.

If, as the administration claims, Laos and Vietnam are related, does the recent increase in activity in Laos signify an expansion of the Vietnam war? It would be tragic if the net result of the President's Vietnamization plan is a shifting of the battlefield from Vietnam to Laos.

If the news reports are accurate, have we committed ourselves to another land war in Asia? The warnings against such an involvement are well known to all Americans, and surely our experience in Vietnam should be ample proof of the soundness of the warnings we have received.

If we are committed to involvement in a conflict in Laos, under what treaty or other agreement are we bound to such a conflict? We know that Laos has disclaimed any right of SEATO protection and that in 1962, in the declaration of the neutrality of Laos the major powers, including the United States, recognized this disclaimer.

If we are committed, what is the extent of the commitment and how much of a sacrifice will the American public be called upon to make? Since we already have reports of American casualties in Laos—191 American airmen had been reported as missing as of February 24—this is no idle question, and one about which the American public deserves an immediate answer.

Answers to these questions and others should be provided to Congress and to the American public. If these questions had been asked at the outset of the Vietnam involvement, perhaps we would not have made some of the tragic mistakes that have been made. I am pleased that the distinguished senior Senator from Missouri (Mr. SYMINGTON), has requested that G. McMurtrie Godley, the U.S. Ambassador in Laos, be recalled for testimony before the special committee he heads. I support the action taken by Senator SYMINGTON and I hope that his efforts and the concern of the public that is beginning to be voiced on this matter will convince the administration of the need to furnish answers to these vital questions.

COMMUNICATION FROM HO CHI MINH TO PRESIDENT NIXON

Mr. DOMINICK. Mr. President, late last year I received in the mail a most interesting and provocative program from a distinguished faculty member, Dr. Roy Colby, of Colorado State College, in Greeley, Colo. Enclosed with the letter to me was a copy of his letter to President Nixon, dated November 5, 1969, which in turn included a translation from Communes-English to standard English of Ho Chi Minh's reply to the President's letter of last summer. Also included in the letter to me was an article entitled "Sprechen Sie Communes?", written by Reed J. Irvine, an adviser to the Division of International Finance and Chief of the Asia, Africa, and Latin American Section of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. The article was published in

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began operating at 9:30, when the Senate first went into session this morning following the recess, or will begin operating at the close of the address of the Senator from California (Mr. CRANSTON). Therefore, I shall not object in this instance.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object—and I shall not—is there no provision for a morning hour this morning?

Mr. BYRD of West Virginia. The Senator is correct. The Senate did not adjourn yesterday at the close of the day, but recessed instead.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is no such provision for a morning hour this morning.

Mr. SYMINGTON. I appreciate the courtesy of the assistant majority leader and the assistant minority leader.

Mr. BYRD of West Virginia. I say again, Mr. President, I can make no exceptions, while I am on the floor, to the operation of the Pastore rule. I feel honor bound not to make any exception or show any partiality, regardless of who the Senator may be. Otherwise, the rule cannot be made to work. But in this instance, I am not sure as to what my rights are under the Pastore rule; and that being the case, I am not going to object.

Moreover, the Senator from California (Mr. CRANSTON) who was to be recognized under the previous order is not in the Chamber at this time. Therefore, I do not object to the request of the distinguished Senator for 4 minutes.

LAOS—THE SECRET WAR

Mr. SYMINGTON. Mr. President, with the current interest directed at what the administration has repeatedly called "recent initiatives" by the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao in the Plain of Jars, I think it worthwhile to look back to what was going on in Laos last September.

The full story of this period and the whole history of fighting in Laos is contained in testimony taken by the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Foreign Relations Committee. Unfortunately the administration has seen fit neither to discuss fully with the American people U.S. involvement in that country and the reasons for it, nor to permit release of the transcript of these hearings which contain that information.

Recognizing the basic responsibility to respect to the security classification attached to this material as it was given to us, the subcommittee has not published that information, formally or informally.

Unfortunately, as Senators we have responsibilities to the American people, and in this instance it is important to note an article published last September in the Bangkok Post by Mr. T. D. Allman, a reporter who has covered the Laotian war for some time and who was one of the three reporters recently arrested in Laos. I would note particularly his discussion of U.S. activities in Laos last fall and his analysis that:

Early this month (September), following U.S.-Laotian planning sessions at Long Cheng, U.S. bombers, gunships, helicopters,

light aircraft, and Laotian soldiers began the largest and politically most important joint operation in the recent history of the Laotian war.

Taking advantage of the Communists' over-extended position, the joint U.S.-Laotian force swept into the lightly defended Plain of Jars, bringing the ground war to the Plain for the first time in more than five years.

And his conclusion that:

With the offensive, the U.S. policy of restricted bombing in northeast Laos, and more importantly, the policy of restraining the Laotian government forces from over-extending themselves, largely went by the board.

Sadly, his prediction—

Few non-Laotian Vientiane observers expect these major and unexpected victories to last. As soon as the Communists can regroup, most observers feel they will sweep back onto the Plain and reverse their losses along Route 9—

Appears to be borne out by recent events.

The American people deserve to have the facts on this growing war situation. The policy that hides these facts behind the cloak of secrecy can only compound the difficult problem we already face.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an article entitled "The Laotian Pendulum Swings To and Fro," written by T. D. Allman and published in the Bangkok, Thailand, Post of September 26, 1969.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE LAOTIAN PENDULUM SWINGS TO AND FRO
(By T. D. Allman)

In March of this year, taking advantage of their steadily improving system of roads and trails, the Communists massed more than five battalions around Na Khang, the supply centre for Samneua Province. In less than twenty four hours this force routed a government contingent from Na Khang and its crucial airfield. The Communists were apparently even able to bring forward anti-aircraft guns for the attack, because a U.S. jet was shot down during the fighting. With Na Khang suddenly lost, the Government's tenuous hold on Samneua Province evaporated.

In response, the U.S. increased its bombing effort in northeast Laos to its present level of about 300 sorties a day. Depending on your point of view, the North Vietnamese by attacking Na Khang, or the U.S. by increasing the bombing, had set in motion an escalatory chain of events.

U.S. bombs could not put the Laotians back in Na Khang. The main question was whether the intensified air attacks could forestall further communist advances. Significantly, certain restraints still existed on U.S. bombing. The Khang Khai area and most of the Plain of Jars were still spared. It also appears that until recently U.S. bombers tried not to hit coolie trains, on the grounds that the coolies were innocent, and perhaps friendly, civilians.

The accelerated US bombing, however, failed to halt a persistent but gradual communist advance. By May, it appeared likely that the North Vietnamese would follow up their capture of Na Khang with a successful assault on Muong Soui, a much more important base northwest of the Plain of Jars.

The result of the threat to Muong Soui was still another decision which raised the level of violence in northeast Laos. For the first time, US officials complied with long-standing Laotian requests for bombing and logistics support for an unprecedented

foray into communist territory near the Plain of Jars. Such requests in the past had always been vetoed because of their implicitly escalatory nature.

In May, in a daring diversionary attack, US bombers leveled the town of Xieng Khouang, southeast of the Plain. Laotian troops then moved in, fanned out into nearby valleys and even, for a short time pushed onto the southeast rim of the still sacrosanct Plain of Jars.

The play for a time seemed to succeed. Pressure on Muong Soui eased as the Communist laboriously shuttled an estimated eight combat battalions from the Muong Soui area toward Xieng Khouangville. Just as the communist counter-offensive assumed its full force, the Laotians staged a tactical retreat in US aircraft. The rains had begun. It appeared that Muong Soui had been saved, and the stalemate in northeast Laos had been preserved for another year. The price had been the destruction of the most populous communist-controlled town in northeast Laos and a definite acceleration of the US war effort there.

The play failed. At the end of June, over-reaching themselves, the Communists seized Muong Soui anyway. They also briefly occupied a strategic road junction, Sala Phou Khoun, on the road between Vientiane and Luang Prabang and later successfully attacked a weak government position southwest of Muong Soui. It was obvious that, unlike in previous years, the main North Vietnamese force would not pull back into North Vietnam for the rainy season but remain in Laos and try to press its advantage. Vientiane observers feared another communist push, this time toward Vang Vieng, the last major pro-government neutralist stronghold.

Again the spiral of escalation had taken another swing. Was the North Vietnamese decision not to pull back this year the cause, or was the cause the unprecedented foray against Muong Soui? The two events seemed intertwined beyond analysis.

What is now fatally apparent is that the situation of late June and early July prompted still another—and much more serious—acceleration of the fighting. Early this month, following US-Laotian planning sessions at Long Cheng, US bombers, gunships, helicopters, light aircraft and Laotian soldiers began the largest and politically most important joint operation in the recent history of the Laotian war.

Taking advantage of the Communists' over-extended position, the joint U.S.-Laotian force swept into the lightly defended Plain of Jars, bringing the ground war to the Plain for the first time in more than five years. They captured the entire Plain in less than two weeks, capping their victories with the occupation of Khang Khai, until the attack the site of a Chinese diplomatic mission.

With the offensive, the US policy of restricted bombing in northeast Laos, and more importantly, the policy of restraining the Laotian government forces from over-extending themselves, largely went by the board. Simultaneously, in Central Laos, American-backed Laotian units pushed east along Route 9 toward the Ho Chi Minh trail, in an area where there had been no communist offensive for more than a year. They captured the town of Muong Phine, and an unprecedented veil of official secrecy supported incorrect reports that the Laotian force had even reached Sepone, a long-held communist town right on the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Few non-Laotian Vientiane observers expect these major and unexpected victories to last. As soon as the Communists can regroup, most observers feel they will sweep back onto the Plain and reverse their losses along Route 9. The major question, therefore, is whether or not the risk of provoking a communist counter-escalation was outweighed by the obvious havoc the thrusts

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The Plain of Jars

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For 20 years now, a tug of war has raged over the Laotian region of strange crockery

By RICHARD HARRIS, The Times of London

LONDON — The Plain of Jars—so called from the large prehistoric funeral urns that have been found there—has been disputed between left-wing and right-wing forces in Laos ever since guerrilla activity began in the country 20 years ago.

A useful point at which readers of this sad history can begin, however, is 1960, when a coup in Vientiane, led by a young captain of parachutists, Kong Lac, tried to install a neutralist regime with Prince Souvanna Phouma as the prime minister.

This was resisted by Prince Boun Oum, the right-wing prime minister—a representative of one of the rival princely houses in the kingdom—and his military commander, Gen. Phoumi Nosavan, whose connections were close both with Thailand and with the American Central Intelligence Agency.

Fairy-Story Elements

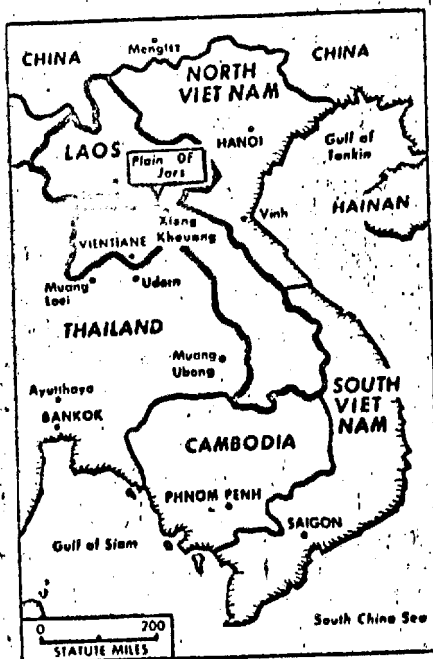
As a result, Prince Souvanna Phouma and the neutralist forces of Kong Lac, evicted from Vientiane, set themselves up on the Plain of Jars. Farther east on this plain were the Communist-led Pathet Lao forces under the nominal leadership of Prince Souvannavong—half-brother of Prince Souvanna Phouma.

To these characters, admirably designed for a fairy story, must be added the sinister elements off-stage: the North Vietnamese backers of the Pathet Lao.

Eventually a resumed Geneva Conference, after sitting from 1961 to July, 1962, decided—Russians and Chinese concurring—that Laos should be given a neutralist-led coalition government. All big-power interference could then cease and Laos could lapse into the insignificance that any visitor to the country finds to be its natural state.

Unfortunately, as after the Geneva Conference in 1954, the plans laid for Laos were frustrated by the extremes of right and left refusing to agree and both of them draining support away from the neutralist center, instead of trying to build up the power of Prince Souvanna Phouma.

Although a coalition government was formed, suspicions survived. The Pathet



Lao ministers in Vientiane found conditions were made impossible for them.

The brief alliance of center and left to force a coalition against the right soon broke up and Prince Souvanna Phouma moved away from the left.

Then the neutralist forces themselves split, a part going over wholly to the Communist side and the rest, remaining at the western end of the Plain of Jars, staying behind Prince Souvanna Phouma.

Two-Part War Evolved

But by 1963 the war in Vietnam was steadily growing and the North Vietnamese, who had often been active in support of the Pathet Lao, now began to take complete charge of operations in Laos.

The war then divided into two sections. One was to maintain the access routes leading from North Vietnam

through Laos into South Vietnam or into the uninhabited jungles of northeast Cambodia—a war directly subsidiary to and in aid of the war in Vietnam.

The other was the war in northern Laos, centering around the Plain of Jars, with the aim of bringing into power in Vientiane a government of a neutralist or left-wing character satisfactory to the North Vietnamese.

This was resisted not only by the mixed military and political forces in Vientiane but by Thailand—a country with an historical interest in Laos that had long been in rivalry with Vietnam's—and by American backing.

Assassinations Occurred

Incidents such as the assassination of the left-wing neutralist foreign minister, Quinim Pholsena, and of another neutralist police chief soon put an end to any hope of cooperation.

In recent years the main events have been:

April 1963—Communist offensive began against remaining neutralist positions on the Plain of Jars.

April 1964—Right-wing military coup in Vientiane overthrows Prince Souvanna Phouma's government. His position was later restored, but the Pathet Lao claimed he was a prisoner of the right and refused any longer to recognize him as prime minister.

July 1964—British-Russian talks aimed at bringing together the three sides in Laos eventually resulted in talks in Paris but when these began it was apparent that the Plain of Jars was regarded as properly controlled by the Pathet Lao forces and they were unwilling to allow any government forces back on the plain.

1965 and 1966—As the war in Vietnam expanded, the affairs of Laos began to seem less urgent. From time to time meetings between the Laotian leaders were proposed but meanwhile operations continued.

Much of the fighting against the Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese was done by a special force formed from the Hmong minority, financed and trained by the Americans.

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The Whole Bloody Mess Again?

U.S. SEN. CHARLES McC. Mathias Jr. (R-Md.) is performing a singular service to the nation in questioning the United States role in Laos. Are we about to open up another Vietnam war in Southeast Asia?

There have been strong indications for many months that the U.S. was operating fighters and bombers from Laotian bases, but White House and Pentagon secrecy has kept the cover on the degree of involvement.

Now three enterprising news correspondents have exposed the secret — they visited a long secret base at Long Cheng in Laos and observed American planes taking off at the rate of one a minute in presumed support of the battle on the Plaine des Jarres. They also reported that there are many armed Americans in civilian clothes at the secret base.

MATHIAS SAYS U.S. Special Forces troops in civilian clothes are fighting side by side with Laotian defenders.

While the Americans are obviously violating the spirit of the 1962 Geneva agreement, which forbids an outside power to base military forces within Laos, the Communist thrust, spearheaded by some 16,000 North Vietnamese troops is an outright violation of the Geneva accord.

The rout of the Laotian forces on the Plaine des Jarres has occurred despite strong support from American bombers, based in neighboring Vietnam and elsewhere.

THE SENATORIAL reaction to Mathias' criticism of our expanding role in Laos has been gratifying. At least, we are not about to get another Tonkin gulf

resolution rammed through the Senate, that can be taken as a carte blanche endorsement of another escalation of the Asian conflict.

Sen. John Sherman Cooper (R-Ky.) says he will seek a total congressional ban on air or ground support to the Laotians by U.S. personnel.

OBVIOUSLY THE presence of American forces and equipment in Laos has the approval of President Nixon. Has the president relegated such crucial matters of foreign policy to the Pentagon and the CIA?

Mr. Nixon's "Guam Doctrine," which calls for limited U.S. overseas involvement, may wind up in the ashcan of wishful thinking, unless he places some kind of throttle on the activities of the CIA schemers and their Pentagon allies.

Unless American involvement ends at once, the whole tragic lesson of the last five years may again be written in the blood of battlefield casualties, both American and Asian.

Hanoi Units in Laos Continuing Advance

By HENRY KAMM

Special to The New York Times

VIENTIANE, Laos, Feb. 26—A battalion of North Vietnamese troops was reported today to have been sighted about 12 miles northeast of the new operational headquarters of the American-backed clandestine army at Long Cheng.

The troops apparently are following up the North Vietnamese recapture of the strategic Plaine des Jarres, which was completed earlier this week when the clandestine army's operational headquarters fell to the attackers.

According to reliable sources, the capture of the headquarters, known as Lima Lima in military code, turned into a rout when 1,300 defenders fled before an attacking force thought to number only 400 men, supported by other units not directly engaged in the final action.

The 1,300 fled to the south and southwest of the plain when the command post, housed in old brick building covered with earth on what was once the principal airfield of the plain in French colonial days, was struck by enemy fire and nearby ammunition dumps exploded.

The sources reported that most of the 1,300 soldiers had been accounted for and were regrouping south and southwest of the plain.

Gen. Vang Pao, the commander of the clandestine army, which is supported by the United States Central Intelligence Agency, visited Lima Lima by helicopter hours before it fell.

Long Cheng, in whose vicinity the North Vietnamese battalions reported to have been seen, is General Vang Pao's headquarters and serves as base and communications center also for the clandestine army's logistics support.

Three reporters, who two days ago evaded the tight security restrictions that bar all

outsiders from Long Cheng, confirmed early reports that while many Americans are based there, there is no indication that they engage in combat operations.

Many American planes use the airstrip, mainly small craft to carry supplies to guerrilla units, target spotters for bombings carried out by the clandestine army's air force, and transport craft to ferry General Vang Pao's soldiers and their equipment into and out of battle.

Long Cheng also serves as base for a few Jolly Green Giant helicopters, which are used to rescue pilots whose planes have been downed.

Military sources reported that heavy air attacks are being carried out against the enemy units that retook the plain to slow their buildup for advances beyond the plateau.

A Blow to Prestige

The loss of Long Cheng would be a great blow to the prestige of General Vang Pao and his guerrillas, mostly Meo mountain tribesmen, although American sources believe that from the practical point of view Long Cheng is not vital to the operations.

Long Cheng was built for the clandestine army, has grown into a town of 40,000 and, in addition to being a military



The New York Times

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Long Cheng, headquarters of American-backed army, near which North Vietnamese unit was reported to be deployed.

headquarters, has taken on the status of capital of the Meos.

Prince Calls for Meeting

VIENTIANE, Feb. 26 (Reuters)—Premier Souvanna Phouma said today he believed the situation in northern Laos justified a meeting of the powers that signed the 1962 Geneva accord on the country's sovereignty.

Speaking to reporters, the Prince said, "We are going to send a protest letter to the co-chairmen of the Geneva confer-

ence [Britain and the Soviet Union] to tell them about the large-scale offensive of the North Vietnamese."

He said Laos would ask the conference co-chairmen to apply Clause IV of the agreement, which calls for the signers to consult one another in the event of a threat against the independence, territorial integrity and neutrality of the kingdom.

Hanoi Accuses Washington

HONG KONG, Feb. 26 (Reuters)—North Vietnam called on the United States today to halt its bombing in Laos and allow the country to settle its affairs on the basis of the 1962 Geneva agreements.

A statement broadcast by the Hanoi radio accused the Americans of carrying out massive bombing raids on Laos, resulting in many civilian casualties.

"The Nixon Administration and its lackeys must be held fully responsible for all the consequences arising from their extremely serious acts of war," it warned.

Thais Sweep Border Areas

BANGKOK, Thailand, Feb. 26 (Reuters)—Thai troops have stepped up their sweeps in northern border areas as part of a full alert ordered yesterday following the North Vietnamese thrust in Laos, official sources said today.

The sources also said the navy was sending patrols along the Mekong River.

The Government has sent 50 special mobile units to protect roads and bridges in strategic border areas near Laos, the sources said.

North Vietnamese forces in Laos are reported to be moving toward the Mekong River, which marks the border in the area.

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Washington: The Hidden War in Laos

ILLEGIB

By JAMES RESTON

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26—In his definitive foreign policy speech of last Nov. 3, President Nixon said: "I believe that one of the reasons for the deep division about Vietnam is that many Americans have lost confidence in what the Government has told them about our policy. The American people cannot and should not be asked to support a policy which involves the overriding issues of war and peace unless they know the truth about that policy."

Well, you can say that again about President Nixon and his policy in Laos. He has withheld the truth about important U.S. military operations in that country. As he is de-escalating the war in Vietnam and claiming a lot of credit for it, he is escalating the war in Laos and not releasing the facts about it.

The result is that the President and the United States Senate are now arguing about U.S. military actions well known to the enemy in Laos but officially withheld from the American people. In fact, State and Defense Department officials have testified in executive session about what our "advisers" and airmen are doing there, but they have claimed executive privilege on this testimony and have refused to release it to the public.

All the Nixon Administration has conceded publicly is that it has certain "advisers" in Laos and has authorized high-level bombing of part of the enemy's supply trail that runs from North Vietnam through Laos into South Vietnam.

In addition to these high-level bombing raids, however, U.S. airmen have been flying fighter support missions for the Laotian Army in the Plaine des Jarres and even closer to the North Vietnamese and Chinese borders; training the Meo mountain tribesmen to fight the North Vietnamese and the Laotian Communists; and according to some Senators, concealing the identity of the American military assistance by transferring regular armed services personnel to the Central Intelligence Agency, and assigning military supply missions to non-military U.S. private airlines.

Goldwater's Candor

It should be noted that a great deal of information about U.S. military action there has been printed, much of it by Henry Kamm of The New York Times. The main issue is not so much about the facts, but about the right of the Administration to try to conceal the facts even after its own officials have confirmed them in private Congressional hearings.

Here, for example, is an exchange between Senator Barry

Goldwater of Arizona and Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri in the Senate on Feb. 25:

Goldwater: Does the Senator mean that the United States has troops in combat in Laos?

Symington: It depends on a definition.

Goldwater: I mean Americans engaged in fighting on the ground.

Symington: I am not in a position to answer any questions . . . in open session at this time . . . because the transcript has not been released as yet on any meaningful basis. . .

Goldwater: The reason I ask is that it has not been any secret that we have been flying fighter-support missions in support of the Laotian army up on the Plaine des Jarres. The Senator, I know, has known about that for a long time. If the information is classified, I will not press the point. . .

There was another sharp debate in an executive meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today over this same issue of what information Senators have the right to request and what information the executive branch has the right to withhold. During a private interrogation of Dwight J. Porter, who has been nominated Ambassador to Korea, Chairman J. William Fulbright asked about the implications of deploying U.S. nuclear weapons in that part of the world.

Ambassador Porter replied that he had been instructed not to discuss this question even with members of the Foreign Relations Committee in secret session. Senator Fulbright observed that in 25 years he had never had such a reply during a confirmation hearing and demanded to know who had so instructed the Ambassador. All Mr. Porter would say was that he had been instructed "on higher authority."

The Constitutional Question

What is happening, in short, is precisely what President Nixon himself warned against in his Nov. 3 speech. Members of the Senate are losing confidence in what the Government is telling them about Laos; members of the press on the scene are being condemned for reporting what they see, and the President and the Foreign Relations Committee are getting into a nasty confrontation over the constitutional question of what information can be withheld, released, or suppressed.

"The American people cannot and should not be asked to support a policy which involves the overriding issues of war and peace," the President said, "unless they know the truth about that policy." Maybe they should not, but they are in Laos, and the President knows it.

RALEIGH, N.C.
NEWS & OBSERVER
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Laos Another Vietnam?

With every new battle in Laos, the United States inches closer to the quicksand of another military involvement in Southeast Asia. This nation now is openly providing air support for the hard-pressed troops of Premier Souvanna Phouma against the North Vietnamese and their Pathet Lao allies. But air support may not prove sufficient. It is not inconceivable that the Communists may soon be capable of overrunning much of this neutralist country. And, if such a crisis develops, the Nixon administration will face a fateful decision.

The Red offensive has three possible objectives. The first, perhaps the primary one, is to defend the Ho Chi Minh trail. This munitions pipeline snakes southward from Hanoi through the jungles of northeastern Laos and on into South Vietnam. The second, less important, may be increased support for the old Pathet Lao ambition to enlarge and secure its Communist enclave in northern Laos. The third possible objective, pregnant with danger, is a test of American foreign policy.

Such a probe of this nation's intentions would quickly disclose whether the President's low-profile approach to Asian affairs is

substance or rhetoric. Mr. Nixon has assured us that America's role is to be that of invited counselor and assistant rather than world policeman. Any departure from that concept most certainly would violate the national commitments resolution approved last year by the Senate. It holds that specific congressional approval is required for any new U.S. troop commitment abroad.

Now, Sen. Charles McC. Mathias, Maryland Republican, accuses the administration of already having overstepped the commitments limitation. He says hundreds of former Green Berets have been recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency for clandestine military operations in support of the Laotian government. If true this is the same sorry pattern of events that led to our entrapment in Vietnam. Mr. Nixon should clap restraints upon the CIA and its agents. The correct approach is to explore a suggestion by Sen. Mike Mansfield, the Senate Democratic leader. He feels that Britain and Soviet Russia should be brought in to mediate in their roles as co-chairmen of the 1962 Geneva Conference on Laos, which drafted accords establishing the country's neutrality.

CARL T. ROWAN

Hanoi Using Laos to Test 'Nixon Doctrine'

Like a recurring stomach ache that eventually starts you worrying about ulcers, a miserable crisis called Laos just keeps coming back.

And it poses the most serious challenge yet to "the Nixon doctrine" of a "low profile" for the United States in the Far East.

Laos again is in danger of being overrun completely by Communists, especially North Vietnamese troops. President Nixon is faced with showing that he can handle this crisis better than his three predecessors in the White House.

Dwight D. Eisenhower agonized over Laos, beat down a Thailand proposal to put troops in and clean out the Communists, then bequeathed a rising crisis to young John F. Kennedy.

Kennedy quickly saw that he could either let the Communists have this Idaho-sized country or he could put in U.S. combat troops to stop them or he could try to work out a peace agreement.

Kennedy tried the latter, ex-

tracting an agreement from Nikita Khrushchev during the 1961 summit meeting in Vienna, that the United States and the Soviet Union would not risk war over Laos. Their deal was consummated in Geneva in 1962. Both sides agreed to pull out foreign troops, and the United States complied by withdrawing 666 "military advisers" before the Oct. 7, 1962, deadline. But only 40 North Vietnamese troops came out past the International Control Commission checkpoints, leaving Laos's neutralist premier, Souvanna Phouma, to complain that thousands of North Vietnamese troops were staying to try to overthrow his government.

Lyndon B. Johnson found a halfway point between the extremes of letting the Communists take Laos and sending in U.S. combat forces. He committed U.S. planes, bombs, commando raiding units, and CIA operatives to a secret war and encouraged the Thais to do some things Eisenhower was reluctant to have them do.

Thus Johnson waged almost full-scale war against the Communists in Laos while everyone's attention was focused on the unsecret war in Vietnam.

Now that indigestible crisis called Laos is on Nixon's plate. And whatever else it represents in terms of a Communist threat to all Southeast Asia, it is a special challenge to this President.

First, it will force the President to reveal some practical specifics about "the Nixon doctrine."

As the Communists take the Plain of Jars and sweep onward, the military situation is about the same as it was nine years ago when Kennedy concluded he had to go to Geneva or go to war.

But a Geneva conference is out of the question for Nixon. He has made it clear that he finds the Paris peace conference a bore, so he could hardly opt for a conference on Laos, not that the Communists are likely to agree to one.

Yet, the Nixon doctrine

would seem to have ruled out sending combat troops to Laos, although the President might decide that this is overt aggression from North Vietnam, a circumstance in which he vaguely left the door open for a commitment of U.S. forces.

What makes it more troublesome for Nixon is his certain knowledge that the Laos offensive is Hanoi's lefthanded way of intensifying the Vietnam war in defiance of all of Nixon's not-so-veiled warnings and in violation of commitments made at the time the United States stopped bombing North Vietnam.

There is no greater fiction than to pretend that the war in Laos is separate from the conflict in Vietnam. From the big air bases at Sattahip, Korat, and Udorn in Thailand, across Laos and onward to the farthest reaches of South Vietnam, it has been one war for years. Planes out of Thailand have struck at Communist units in Laos as often as a target in North Vietnam. Airfields in Laos have been used to strike at targets in North and South Vietnam, as well as to harass Communist units moving down the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos.

The first time I heard Nixon warn that the United States would take stern action if the Communists increased the level of warfare, I knew that it was inevitable that Hanoi would test him. When he went to Asia to talk about a lowered profile for the United States in that part of the world, I knew that it was inevitable that the Communists would soon start probing to find out just how low that profile might be.

Well, the moment of truth seems to be near. With characteristic devilishness, the Communists have challenged in a little landlocked piece of real estate that might not be worth a dollar an acre in the normal context of things.

But in the context of world politics and world power — not to mention U.S. domestic politics — Laos is worth a bundle.

We learned a lot about Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson from the way they handled — or did not handle — the challenge of Laos. As Nixon grapples with it, we shall learn a lot more about him and his foreign policy than we could divine from 13 months of press conferences and television speeches.

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The Mystery in Laos

The intensifying war in Laos poses some critical questions about this nation's strategy in Southeast Asia.

Over the last few months an expanding core of congressional critics has become increasingly vocal and bipartisan. Their concern is for what they describe as our "deepening military involvement," the secrecy surrounding our actions in Laos and the relationship of that commitment to "Vietnamization."

The public response of the administration has been less than candid.

President Nixon has forbidden release of secret testimony taken last October by a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on American military involvement in Laos. And although the President devoted 11 pages of his "State of the World" message to Vietnam, Laos was not mentioned.

Despite the secrecy, it seems evident that the delicate balance of Laotian neutrality dictated by the 1962 Geneva Accords has come badly unhinged.

The North Vietnamese have stepped up their military activity there. That action protects their valuable infiltration route, the Ho Chi Minh Trail. It may also have a political motivation — to sink the "neutral" regime of Prince Souvanna Phouma in favor of one more favorably disposed to Hanoi's objectives.

The CIA evidently has escalated its support of the prince's Royal Laotian Army. Fighters and bombers make daily sorties. There have been reports that hundreds of former Green Berets

recruited by the CIA are assisting in clandestine ground operations there.

Sen. Charles McC. Mathias, R-Md., says the scope of American presence in Laos clearly "violates the spirit" of the National Commitments Resolution. Passed last year, the resolution holds that specific congressional approval should be required for every new commitment of American troops abroad.

Mathias also suggests that the current situation conflicts with an amendment to the Defense Appropriations Act that sought to prohibit the use of American ground troops in Laos or Thailand.

"It would be a cruel disappointment of President Nixon's hopes for peace if the success of Vietnamization in South Vietnam depends on escalation of the United States engagement in Laos," Mathias says.

For although the administration has argued, as did the previous Democratic administrations, that hostilities in Laos and Vietnam are related, little has been said of the need for negotiating a regional settlement.

The reassurance by Secretary of Defense Laird that basic U.S. policy toward Laos has not changed is a helpful bit of clarification. But there is still unrest in Congress and concern in the country, because of the Vietnam experience. President Nixon must keep that fact in mind, and measure it against his own promises to give the public the truth about policies that may lead to war, as he manages the Laotian affair.

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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

February 20, 1970

When these farmers had all this done, they would still have a little twice-daily chore of milking about 15 million cows—50 apiece—to keep us in milk, cheese, and butter.

I doubt that even the fabled ranch of television fame—the Ponderosa Ranch which is the setting for “Bonanza”—would get into the elite 6 percent for the evidence indicates that they only have feeder cattle—and have shirked producing all of these other agricultural products.

It is preposterous to indicate to the American people that about 300,000 farmers are all we need.

If we attain the objective of 300,000 farms, you and I are going to have some mighty restricted menus, and the quality is going to be considerably poorer than it is today. We will be living on bread, hominy, and hamburgers, for we will not be able to spare any of the basic producers to the “value-added” operations like feeding our cattle, or to frills like fruits, nuts, lettuce, and any mass-produced vegetables—potatoes, maybe. When we reduce the number of farmers we will also reduce the variety and quality of our diet.

Yes, Mr. Columnist, what serves best in this computerized, supersonic age, is one or two simple figures—capsulized data that is supposed to lead to quick solutions of all the problems. But the data being used to indicate that 88 percent of all farmers are unnecessary, and the remaining 12 percent would be too well-fixed to need a farm program, misrepresents the realities.

Here are some of those realities:

The average age of the 3 million farmers and ranchers in America is 53 years—which does not indicate prosperous and thriving business that young people enter.

Only 16 percent of the Nation's disposable income goes for food—the lowest in our history and the lowest of any major nation in all the history of the world, and yet this buys the most wholesome, the most varied, and nutritious food available in any nation on earth.

Only 5 percent of the disposal income of the Nation actually gets back to the farm producers, including both the big and the small—the rest of the 16 percent is for foreign products or mark-ups in the distribution system.

And how are the farmers faring?

Mr. and Mrs. Wheat Farmer sell wheat at \$1.25—the 1948 price, or 5 percent of a fair price, or parity.

Mr. and Mrs. Corn Farmer sell corn at \$1.12; they are getting 64 percent of a fair price, or parity. Feed grains were nearly all selling down in the low-sixties.

Wool is bringing 41 cents of parity.

Oranges and tangerines are at 30 and 32 percent of parity.

Beef cattle on the hoof, supposedly high priced, are actually at only 82 percent of parity.

On the cost side, Mr. and Mrs. Farmer and Mr. and Mrs. Rancher are paying for everything they buy at prices which compare, unfortunately with current high interest rates—9 and 10 percent per year—the highest in all of their 53

years. Tractors and gasoline and other farm supplies—including interest and taxes and excluding only fertilizer—are the highest in all history. All in all the agricultural producers sell their products at low prices, have high costs, and are in tough times.

Now let me divert back a moment to products we might miss.

I forgot about beeswax.

I wonder if those 130,000 farmers referred to in Don Oberdorfer's column would produce 50 percent of our beeswax requirements.

Maybe it is none of our beeswax, as the hip kids of an earlier generation used to say.

But 50 percent of farm production on 6 percent of our farms?

It is simply a preposterous over simplification of the agricultural situation that the public is entitled to understand at least a little better than that.

If they do not; if national policy is going to be made on the basis of the Oberdorfer generalities and we wipe out 90 percent of farmers, get ready for beef, ground into hamburger patties, bread, and hominy. Variety and quality will have to go, along with the real food bargain the American people enjoy today.

OUR MILITARY ROLE IN LAOS

(Mr. BOLAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute, to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. BOLAND. Mr. Speaker, this country's military role in Laos grows more alarming every day. Scores of reports—reports from highly reliable sources, I should point out—indicate that U.S. military advisers veritably teem over Laotian bases. Indeed, some reports maintain that the number of military advisers guiding Laotian troops surpasses the number of advisers working in South Vietnam under the Kennedy administration. Still further reports, cited yesterday by Senators MATTHIAS and MANFIELD, contend that hundreds of former Green Berets have been recruited by the CIA for military operations in Laos. Chafing under the political restrictions that limit their activities in Vietnam—restrictions they term “handcuffs”—these Green Berets reportedly joined the CIA so they could exercise their combat skills with what is tantamount to a kind of military carte blanche in Laos. Our military activities there are reminiscent—chillingly reminiscent—of our activities in South Vietnam a decade ago. Step by step, inch by inch, the United States is being drawn into a war that threatens to engulf Laos within a few years.

U.S. military advisers are increasing in number virtually day by day. Combat forays into the countryside and its hamlets are increasing. Bombing sorties launched from carriers or land bases are increasing. And North Vietnam's response—a quite predictable response, if we have learned anything at all from 10 years of war in Vietnam—has been a proportionate increase in its own military thrust there.

Without the knowledge of the Ameri-

can people—indeed, without the full knowledge of the Congress—the United States is steadily approaching the brink of another full-scale war in Southeast Asia.

Have we learned nothing from our harrowing decade in Vietnam? Have we learned nothing from scores of pledges from our military leaders—pledges that just one more escalatory step, just one more combat division or just one more fleet of warplanes, would bring the Communists to their knees? Have we learned nothing from the slow process that eventually left Vietnam's cities in rubble, its hamlets in flames, hundreds of thousands dead and billions of dollars wasted?

We in the Congress must not countenance the kind of military intervention that kindled a disastrous war in Vietnam and threatens to kindle an equally disastrous war in Laos. We should—indeed, we must—exercise our responsibilities in shaping this Nation's foreign policy. The administration's activities in Laos are being carried out without even the most cursory attempt to inform the Congress and solicit its guidance. The Congress—and the Congress alone—has the constitutional right to declare war.

I am filing today with the Clerk of the House a resolution demanding that the administration reveal precisely and explicitly the extent of our military operations in Laos, and calling on him not to increase these operations without the clear consent of the Congress.

One Vietnam is enough.

The American people—and its representatives in the Congress—will not tolerate another one.

FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA

(Mr. BEVILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks, and to include extraneous matter.)

Mr. BEVILL. Mr. Speaker, between February 21 and 28, this country observes FFA Week. During this week the Future Farmers of America will conduct special events expressly designed to emphasize agriculture and the role it will play in our future.

I am proud to join in paying tribute to these outstanding young people.

I include for the Record an editorial which appeared in the Sand Mountain Reporter, of Albertville, Ala. This article appropriately gives a well-deserved pat-on-the-back to our Future Farmers. The editorial follows:

FUTURE FARMERS

Agriculture, while still basic to survival, has become far removed from the knowledge of most of us. The nation depends upon today's agri-businessmen, who have made a science of farming. Like any science, farming requires an early start in life for those who wish to become successful agriculturists.

Between February 21 and 28, the country will be observing FFA Week. During this week the Future Farmers of America, a national organization with 450,000 students studying vocational agriculture in 9,000 public schools, will conduct special events expressly designed to emphasize agriculture and the role it will play in our future.

a spill-over of District problems, and as the decade progresses, that spill-over will penetrate most suburban jurisdictions.

There is a long tradition in this area of local pride and in competition with neighboring jurisdictions. If we are to continue to enjoy the economic health of this area, we must begin to concentrate on those problems which unite us, instead of seeing mostly the issues that divide us. We must begin now to do serious economic planning on a Metropolitan basis. Through the Council of Governments, we have achieved a solid measure of regional cooperation in matters of physical planning. The Metro is another example of our ability to work together to achieve a mutually beneficial goal. We must now move beyond these safe and relatively non-controversial programs to find Metropolitan solutions to the real problems that threaten the health of the region in the coming decade—crime—and the related problems of jobs and training for the unskilled and the unemployed—of decent and adequate housing that falls within the price range of every citizen—of rehabilitation of those caught up in the vicious cycle of crime—of reconciliation between the races.

I am convinced that the great majority of the citizens of the Metropolitan Area want to see these problems tackled and solved, and are willing to support any intelligent program to achieve that end. I sense this willingness in the business community, and if this willingness is properly mobilized, the job can and will be done.

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 20, 1970]

NEEDED: A METROPOLITAN SOLUTION

Without doubt, the Washington area is growing rapidly—as fast as any area in the nation. The traditional year-end forecasts from businessmen in this newspaper's Business Outlook Section were generally optimistic and the neat business indicator chart accompanying the forecasts showed plus signs far outnumbering minuses. Some of the forecasters saw short-range problems with inflation and tight money, particularly in the housing field, but not enough to choke off the area's growth. The history of the area has been one of almost steady expansion since the beginning of the Republic and the general feeling was that the future undoubtedly would mirror the past.

But the forecasts contained some warning notes which are worth pondering as we look ahead. Perhaps the most sobering was voiced by Joseph B. Danzansky, chairman of the Mayor's Economic Development Committee and president of Giant Food Stores. He points out that the economy of the District of Columbia proper as distinct from the overall area economy "is in advanced stages of a serious illness and this illness does not show any indications of expected improvement for the foreseeable future." Because this is an "integrated metropolitan economy," he expects the cancer in the city proper to spread into the affluent suburbs and threaten the over-all health of the entire area. Therefore, he suggests the entire area has a stake in solving the problems of the District on a metropolitan basis. The area must, he suggests:

"Find metropolitan solutions to the real problems that threaten the health of the region in the coming decade—crime—and the related problems of jobs and training for the unskilled and the unemployed—of decent and adequate housing that falls within the price range of every citizen—of rehabilitation of those caught up in the vicious cycle of crime—of reconciliation between the races."

Other commentators point to the continued boom in downtown office building construction as a sign of economic health, but Thomas M. Walsh suggests that some of them may be hard to rent. He is concerned about enterprises moving to the suburbs because

of rising land costs, changing shopping patterns and crime, and, like Mr. Danzansky, urges that something be done to "stabilize this unfavorable condition." Worth pondering is a suggestion from Theodore Hagana, president of the D.C. Chamber of Commerce, a predominantly black business organization, that ways should be found of "including those who are now excluded" by buying services and goods offered by black businessmen and professional men.

Many forecasters appear to be looking to the Metro to make downtown more accessible to suburbanites and make suburban jobs more accessible to residents of the inner city. And construction of the subway, itself, will provide jobs for inner-city blacks. Many of them are jobless or underemployed in spite of the fact that the area labor market is extraordinarily tight and the whole area is extraordinarily prosperous with average family income now at \$14,200, highest in the land.

Mr. Danzansky warns that the affluent suburbs cannot escape the problems of the inner city. The spill-over of Washington problems already has reached communities adjacent to the city line "and, as the decade progresses, that spill-over will penetrate most suburban jurisdictions." The solution he suggests—and it makes sense—is for all of us to "unite" on the problems that are shared instead of the issues that "divide," and "begin now to do serious economic planning on a metropolitan basis." It is hard to see how any other approach can work.

EVENTS IN LAOS

Mr. ALLOTT. Mr. President, some Senators have expressed concern and alarm about the train of events in Laos.

Certainly it is right to be alarmed about North Vietnam's brazen attacks on the Plaine des Jarres.

It is not clear what U.S. policy should be regarding this latest evidence of North Vietnam's expansionist policies. But at the very least, we should learn five lessons from North Vietnam's aggression.

First, we should notice how fragile the so-called neutralization of Laos has proven to be. Senators recall that the United States took part in setting up the "neutralized" Laos almost 9 years ago. And Laos has barely known a day of peace since. In fact, Laos is only relatively peaceful when the North Vietnamese are fully preoccupied with their attempt to conquer South Vietnam.

The second lesson we should learn from the troubles in Laos is that North Vietnam has not lost its appetite for aggression simply because American forces have stymied its attempt to conquer South Vietnam. North Vietnam's aggressive impulses are just finding a new outlet in another war against a neighboring state.

The third lesson we should learn is that the so-called domino theory looks more valid with every passing hour.

This theory holds that the fates of the various non-Communist nations of Southeast Asia are closely linked. The theory holds that if one of these nations is allowed to fall under Communist aggression, others are apt to fall like a row of dominos.

Mr. President, the conclusion is inescapable that conditions in the battered Laotian nation indicate that North Vietnam may soon turn the domino theory into the domino reality.

This brings us to a fourth lesson we should learn from Laos. We should learn something about the nature of our enemy in the Vietnam war.

During the last decade there has been much speculation about the nature of the conflict in South Vietnam and about North Vietnam's motive for fighting there.

According to one theory, the conflict in South Vietnam is an "indigenous peasant revolt" and the North Vietnamese are only motivated by a nationalistic desire to unify the two Vietnams.

It has been tempting to accept this soothing interpretation. If this interpretation were true then we could consider the conflict in Vietnam as a purely local disturbance without larger significance, and without the potential for doing widespread and lasting damage.

Unfortunately this theory about the nature of the Vietnam war, and about the nature of North Vietnam's involvement, is a casualty of the developing war in Asia.

The theory that North Vietnamese aggression is only misguided nationalism is another theory killed by a fact. It has been killed by the fact of aggression in Laos, an aggression that cannot be rationalized as a simple expression of a desire for national unity. It has always been false—but at least plausible—to argue that the two Vietnams "naturally" form a single nation. But it would be preposterous to argue that North Vietnam has a legitimate interest in annexing Laos.

This brings us to a fifth lesson we should learn from the events in Laos.

If and when the North Vietnamese actually consent to talk at the so-called Paris peace talks, we should remember that their claims to legitimate interests in the internal affairs of other nations have a way of multiplying.

Further the wars they are involved in tend to multiply even while they pretend to be engaged in ending a war.

None of this is surprising. It has always been true that Communists treat negotiations as war carried on by other means. The negotiating table is just another theater of conflict. When the North Vietnamese are involved, the negotiating table is one of an increasing number of war theaters.

Mr. President, I join those Senators who have expressed concern and alarm about the war in Laos. I only urge them to consider all the possible implications of that war, and to learn all the lessons which it can teach us.

THE U.S. POSITION IN LAOS

Mr. RIBICOFF. Mr. President, the American people and Congress have largely been kept ignorant by our Government as to the nature and extent of our expenditures of men and money in Laos.

We have no official commitment to defend Laos, yet it has been reported 400 sorties have been flown by American aircraft in a single day over Laos. We have lost 100 of our pilots during raids over Laos but this has not been confirmed—even to the families of the dead.



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Senate

The Senate met at 10 o'clock a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. RUSSELL).

The Chaplain, the Reverend Edward L. R. Elson, D.D., offered the following prayer:

O Sovereign Lord, before whose divine majesty we know that we are weak and needy. Thou art holy and we are unholy. Thou art perfect and we are imperfect. Thou art strong and we are weak. Yet there are no other hands but human hands, no other minds but men's minds to do Thy work in the world. As Thy servant of old wrote, "If any man lacks wisdom, he should pray to God, who will give it to him; for God gives generously and graciously to all," so we pray that Thou wilt flood our minds with Thy light and truth, that our work may be Thy work, and that we may know and do Thy will.

In the Redeemer's name. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the Journal of the proceedings of Wednesday, February 25, 1970, be dispensed with.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRANSACTION OF ROUTINE MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, after the distinguished Senator from New York (Mr. JAVITS) has finished his remarks this morning, I ask unanimous consent that the transaction of routine morning business be conducted with statements by any Senator being limited to 3 minutes; and I further ask unanimous consent that it be in order to include in the morning business additional statements presented at the desk by each Senator personally and respectively.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS DURING SENATE SESSION

Mr. MANSFIELD. I ask unanimous consent that all committees be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate today.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE SITUATION IN LAOS

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, on yesterday, the distinguished Senator from Maryland (Mr. MATTHIAS) raised some very pertinent questions about the situation in Laos, in which he made a reference to the use of Green Berets in various forms in the Laotian situation.

I expressed some surprise at the statement, even though the Senator from Maryland said his information was not definite. However, last night, in reading an article entitled "We Seek No Wider War in Laos," written by Mr. Arnold Abrams and published in the magazine Atlas, I note a reference to the use of Green Berets in Laos.

I ask unanimous consent that the article published in the magazine Atlas be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

WE SEEK NO WIDER WAR IN LAOS—DOES THAT SOUND FAMILIAR?

(NOTE.—The continuing conflict in Laos sporadically produces a rash of headlines in the U.S. press which are quickly forgotten. Some time ago, for instance, Senator J. W. Fulbright questioned America's ten-year involvement in Laos, but after some fulmination the issue faded. Arnold Abrams, a seasoned correspondent now writing for Hong Kong's highly respected Far Eastern Economic Review, raises the question anew with a sweeping and ominous examination of the unpublishable battles now taking place in the Laotian underbrush. No U.S. officials assured Abrams, America seeks no wider war in Laos . . . and the writer was reminded of other words in other places.)

Despite blithe denials and bland interpretations by Vientiane officials, the war in Laos may be entering a decisive phase. U.S. Embassy officials insist—in private—that the decade-long struggle here is still an American "holding operation," a lowkey effort with limited objectives. But intensified fighting in the last six months may have triggered an escalatory cycle leading to another face-off between Washington and Hanoi. Government forces now wait anxiously to learn what post-dated price tag will be put on their late-summer offensive which pushed the enemy off the Plain of Jars for the first time in five years. However, thrusts by communist forces in other areas have to some extent dampened the government's success.

The expected enemy thrust could force a crucial decision on Washington: whether or not to increase American involvement in Laos when standing fast might be tantamount to backing off. An American plunge into another Asian quagmire is almost unthinkable at

present, but Richard Nixon's willingness to concede control of a contested country to communist forces is equally hard to envision. U.S. policymakers had been hoping to avoid such a decision by keeping this conflict stalemated until a Vietnam settlement, involving Laos, could be reached. They managed that until last June, when a turn-about in enemy tactics drastically changed the course of this war. Now, with no Vietnam settlement in sight, time may be running out on American hopes in Laos.

Last June's enemy assault involved an estimated seven North Vietnamese battalions in a successful four-day siege against the government outpost of Muong Soui, straddling the Plain of Jars' western edge.

Moreover, the North Vietnamese didn't stop at Muong Soui. They pushed south and west, severing road links to the royal capital and probing at Long Cheng, northern nerve center of the CIA and operations base for General Vang Pao's so-called secret army.

The enemy's steamrolling drive shattered the morale of government forces and brought U.S. and Laotian officials to the verge of despair. In late summer the shaken officials decided to hit back hard. A secrecy-shrouded counter-offensive was launched, marked by fierce American aerial pounding and increased American logistical support. The government won back Muong Soui, regained the Plain of Jars.

Vientiane officials now try to play down the late-summer action, particularly the Americans' role. They talk of government troops "waltzing in" to the Plain of Jars, finding that the North Vietnamese had abandoned it, leaving behind large amounts of supplies.

These officials have no evidence to support that theory. Moreover, when pressed in a private interview, a top-ranking American official conceded that the September events "weren't exactly quite so simple." He admitted that "some pressure" had been applied to enemy encampments before government forces advanced. Some pressure? Could it be, he then was asked, that the pressure consisted of unusually intensive American air attacks? "Look," he said, "let's just say there was considerable pressure and leave it at that. I can't discuss this any further."

So now American officials and government forces await retribution. In the event of a strong enemy strike Vientiane undoubtedly is ready to accuse the other side of escalating the conflict.

U.S. officials deny the conflict is escalating and discount the possibility of Laos evolving into another Vietnam. They say the fighting will remain limited, largely because Washington and Hanoi both want it that way. Some of these officials resent the recent furor about Laos and the Senate subcommittee hearings that developed from it.

At the hearings' end, Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the influential Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that U.S. operations in Laos had been conducted with-

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out the knowledge or consent of Congress. He concluded that Washington's involvement in Laos was "most unusual and irregular—if not unconstitutional."

The American people have yet to be told by their government that their nation is militarily involved in Laos. American officials still seek to officially conceal U.S. violations of the 1962 Geneva Accord, which bars all forms of foreign military intervention in Laos. They contend that Hanoi's refusal to concede the presence of North Vietnamese troops here makes it diplomatically unfeasible for the U.S. to act otherwise.

Consequently, everyone in Vientiane, from the Russian ambassador to the mamasan of the legendary White Rose, knows what the Americans are doing here. But the American public remains ignorant of the fact that their government is arming, training, supplying, transporting and directing approximately 70,000 Laotian troops in a war which threatens to get out of hand.

Instead of setting the record at least partially straight, U.S. officials here do things like allowing Vang Pao to declare recently, before a sizable contingent of visiting journalists that his Mee forces fight with antiquated weapons, inadequate communications and inconsequential American support. As he was speaking, American F-4 Phantom jets roared overhead, several American observation planes were parked nearby and three cargo-laden American transport planes landed in quick succession at his official Sam Thong base. After denying he even received indirect U.S. military support, Vang Pao calmly climbed into an unmarked American helicopter, guarded by Laotian troops carrying American-made M-16 automatic rifles, and was flown back to his secret Long Cheng headquarters by a three-man American crew.

Vang Pao and official verbiage notwithstanding, American involvement in the Laotian conflict takes the following principal forms: in addition to 75 military advisers listed as embassy "attachés," about 300 men are employed in a variety of clandestine military activities supervised by the CIA. Although technically civilians, many CIA agents in Laos are former Special Forces soldiers recruited because of military expertise and Vietnam experience.

These ex-Green Berets train government troops, assist wide-ranging reconnaissance teams and plan guerrilla and psychological warfare operations. They wear combat fatigues and work out of three main camps, where they administer rigorous training in jungle warfare, guerrilla tactics, communications handling and weaponry. The CIA also maintains and largely controls Vang Pao's army of approximately 15,000 full-time troops. Official instructions to the contrary, CIA personnel occasionally accompany these forces on combat forays. More than 20 agents have been killed in Laos.

"These guys are tigers," says an American personally acquainted with many CIA agents in Laos. "They're tough, intelligent guys who know how to handle themselves. They're not afraid to mix it up in the jungle." The American is a civilian engineer who befriended many agents while helping to build airstrips on several of their remote outposts. "They came to Laos because they were fed up with having their hands tied in Vietnam," he says. "Here they're doing things the way they want to and getting better pay for it as well."

Learning about these activities prompted Senator Fulbright to raise a key question about the CIA's role here: since its function ostensibly is to gather information, why is this agency running a war in Laos? "I don't approve of this kind of activity at all," Fulbright said, "but if it is in the national interest to do this, it seems to me it ought to be done by regular U.S. Army

forces and not by an intelligence-gathering agency." He added that the National Security Act, which created the CIA, "never contemplated this function" for the agency.

The CIA mission chief in Laos is Lawrence Devlin, listed as a "political officer" in the U.S. Embassy. Unlike most political officers, however, Devlin flatly refuses to see reporters.

Cargo and military supplies—as well as personnel—are ferried throughout Laos by Air America and Continental Air Services, private charter firms under contract to the U.S. government. They are better known as the "CIA Airlines," and most of their pilots are ex-Air Force officers.

Another form of American air service in Laos constitutes the most direct U.S. involvement in the fighting. Under the euphemism of "armed reconnaissance flights," Thailand-based American jets and bombers have mounted aerial bombardments equal to the pounding taken by North Vietnam prior to the bombing halt in 1968. The Ho Chi Minh trail in southeast Laos has been the prime target of American air attacks, but enemy encampments and troops on the Plain of Jars came under heavy fire during the recent government offensive.

The sum total of American assistance here is reliably estimated at between \$250 million and \$300 million per year. Of that, only the technical aid budget—about \$60 million—is made public. The rest, undisclosed, goes almost entirely for military purposes.

U.S. officials here stress that American money and manpower expenditures in Laos are minuscule compared to those in Vietnam. Washington is spending about \$30 billion in Vietnam and has lost almost 40,000 servicemen there. Less than 200 U.S. personnel—mostly airmen—have been killed in Laos. A small conflict fought by volunteers may not be laudable, they say, but it beats a big bloody one by draftees.

Perhaps, but what happens when a little war threatens to escalate into a huge ugly one like Vietnam? As the *N.Y. Times*' Tom Wicker pointed out: "... In an ironic twist on the domino theory, anything that puts an end to those pressures in the South, including defeat for Hanoi as well as victory or a negotiated settlement, could cause North Vietnam to try either to recoup or keep up its momentum in Laos."

A top embassy official in Vientiane argues: "There is no chance of turning this into another Vietnam. We know the mistakes made in Vietnam and we have no intention of repeating them. Hanoi understands our position here. We seek no wider war."

Does it sound familiar?

Mr. MANSFIELD subsequently said: Mr. President, so that my previous reference in the Record to Green Berets possibly being in Laos may be clear, I was referring to former Green Berets or ex-Green Berets. That should be made clear; otherwise, what I said previously might be misconstrued. So far as I know no active members of the Special Services, sometimes known as Green Berets, are in Laos, although according to the article in *Atlas* magazine former Green Berets or ex-Green Berets are there. I hope the Record will be clear in this respect.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the order heretofore entered, the distinguished Senator from New York (Mr. JAVITS) is now recognized for 15 minutes.

"NO" ON JUDGE CARSWELL'S CONFIRMATION

Mr. JAVITS. Mr. President, I have sought this time and appreciate its being made available to me by the leadership, to announce my position in respect to the confirmation of Judge Carswell to be a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

I have approached the Carswell nomination as I did the Haynsworth nomination with a presumption in favor of the President's nominee. I considered this my duty both as a Senator and as a Republican. But I find that I cannot vote to confirm Judge Carswell for essentially the same reasons that I could not vote to confirm Judge Haynsworth.

As with the Haynsworth nomination and with all nominations to the Supreme Court, I view the Senate's role of advise and consent as to require me to judge the nominee's fitness on the basis of character, philosophy, and professional attainment, and not on the basis solely of "name, rank, and serial number," as some would argue. The President is entitled to choose a conservative or strict constructionist for the Supreme Court. But this does not preclude me from making a substantive finding on the question of Judge Carswell's qualifications to sit on the High Court.

Many Senators voted against Judge Haynsworth's confirmation for reasons of conflict of interest, or because they strongly opposed his record in labor cases. My opposition, however, was based primarily on his insensitivity to the real meaning of equal protection when it comes to racial segregation. In announcing my decision on Judge Haynsworth, I stated that I had reached this conclusion because "his views on the application of the Constitution to the most critical constitutional question of our time—racial segregation—are so consistently insensitive to the centuries-old injustice which we as a Nation have caused our black citizens to bear, that I could not support the introduction of his judicial philosophy into the Nation's highest court." And that is the reason that I announce my opposition to Judge Carswell's confirmation today.

Indeed, the record in the case of Judge Carswell also contains statements and actions of the nominee as a private citizen which reinforce my impression that he will not as a Justice be diligent in extending equal protection of the law to all our citizens in civil rights cases.

G. HAROLD CARSWELL AS CITIZEN

At least three incidents involving Judge Carswell as a private citizen have been brought to light since this nomination was sent to the Senate. All three indicate an attitude toward black Americans which I find unacceptable. I believe the insensitivity which produced them is also reflected in Judge Carswell's decisions.

First, in chronological order, there is the 1948 speech strongly reaffirming the nominee's dedication to the doctrine of white supremacy. Granted that the speech was made in the heat of a political campaign, but the words themselves

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CIA Copter Pilot Killed Ferrying Supplies to Laos

From Our Wire Services

VIENTIANE, Laos, Feb. 22. — A U. S. helicopter pilot has been killed by sniper fire while ferrying supplies to beleaguered Laotian government forces on the Plain of Jars, the U. S. Embassy reported Sunday.

A spokesman identified the pilot as J. C. Maerkl of Fort Worth, Tex., flying for Air America, a commercial airline under contract to the Central Intelligence Agency.

REPORTS SKETCHY

Maerkl's death Thursday was the first reported American casualty in the battle for the Plain of Jars which ended Saturday with a victory by North Vietnamese forces.

Forty hours after the fall of the Plain of Jars to the North Vietnamese, reports on action in that area remained sketchy.

Of the 1500-man government defense force that was overrun at the strategic Xieng Khouang airstrip, informed sources said, 700 had been accounted for and another 700 were believed to be "wandering around" in the hills on the edge of the plain. There were no indications of what happened to the remaining 100 defenders.

NO CASUALTY FIGURES

No casualty figures have been issued for either side.

Newsmen were unable to visit the battle zone.

Military and diplomatic sources who have access to reports from the Plain of Jars region said, however, that the 50-mile by-20-mile plain was under firm North Vietnamese control.

But continuing air strikes by

American and royal Lao Air Force planes have forced the North Vietnamese to take cover during the day in the hills flanking the plain, the sources said.

The defense of the Plain of Jars region had been entrusted to 10,000 tough Meo tribesmen guerillas, commanded by Gen. Vang Pao and financed and trained by the United States.

MOUNTAIN FORT

Western military sources said that with control of the plain, the North Vietnamese might elect to attack Vang Pao's secret mountain fortress at Long Cheng or the former nontralist town of Mueng Soui, which the enemy seized last summer and later relinquished.

Meanwhile, U. S. Army troops fanned out Sunday around Tam Ky City on the northern coast, seeking North Vietnamese and Vietcong units that inflicted heavy casualties on American forces in the area two days ago.

RAIDS RESUMED

At the same time, the U. S. Command reported, B-52 resumed regular bombing raids over South Vietnam after two days of being diverted to Laos to blunt the North Vietnamese advance there.

Troops from the Americal Division's 196th Brigade, the same unit mauled in a Communist ambush Friday, fought a series of clashes in their sweep Sunday around Tam Ky, 40 miles southeast of the port city of Da Nang. At least 23 Communists were killed in the operation, military spokesmen said, while the brigade lost at least two dead and 11 wounded.

The B-52s flew two raids over Tay Ninh Province northwest of Saigon and near the Cambodian border and two over Chau Doc Province in the Mekong Delta 110 miles southwest of the capital.

To the south on the same stretch of coastline where the 196th Brigade was fighting Sunday, South Vietnamese troops killed 22 Communists and captured a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition without suffering a casualty themselves.

U.S. Force in Laos Stirs Senate Anger

Breach of Hill's Intent Seen

By Warren Unna
Washington Post Staff Writer

Angry senators jumped on the administration yesterday after reading eyewitness news accounts reporting that armed Americans in civilian garb and American-supplied bombing planes are being involved in the war in Laos.

"Laos has become an arena for the repetition of the mistakes of our Vietnamese involvement," declared Sen. Charles McC. Mathias Jr. (R-Md.) in a speech on the Senate floor.

"I believe that the American people—and the Congress—will not ultimately accept a withdrawal policy (from Vietnam) that entails merely a changing of uniforms and titles and a re-engagement in Laos."

Mathias said the U.S. activities in Laos would appear to "clearly violate the spirit" of two congressional actions last year: the "National Commitments Resolution," requiring specific congressional approval for every new engagement of American troops abroad; and the Cooper-Church amendment to the Defense Appropriations Act—blessed by the Nixon administration—which prohibits funding of any U.S. ground combat troops in either Laos or Thailand.

"Can the reservation of war powers to the Congress be circumvented by redesignating soldiers as agents of the CIA or as military advisers?" Mathias asked.

"It would be a cruel disappointment of President Nixon's hopes for peace if success of vietnamization of south Vietnam depend on the escalation of U.S. engagement in Laos," Mathias warned.

Another Republican, Sen. John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky, promised to tack amendments onto all future defense appropriations bills to extend the earlier congressional stricture against U.S. ground combat troops to "air, naval and civilian forces."

Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) released a letter he had written to Secretary of State William P. Rogers requesting that Ambassador G. McMurtre Godley be summoned home "as soon as possible" to give the facts to his Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) delivered a scorching rebuke to Godley from the Senate floor after reading press accounts. These quoted Godley as having declared that the Embassy had "lost interest in helping out the press" after three newsmen had been seized by Lao troops for looking into secret areas.

Mansfield said that the fact that Laos has not yet become another Vietnam "may well be due to the persistent effort of the American press."

He praised the reporters in Laos for having "penetrated the veil of vague policy in

which this involvement has been wrapped for too many years."

The State Department later announced that Godley had been cabled for comment and declared he had never made such a statement. Now State is trying to find out whether an Embassy spokesman may have made it in the ambassador's behalf.

The three newsmen, representing The New York Times, Life magazine and a foreign news agency, had left a U.S.-guided tour of an innocuous area and gone on their own to the long-secret base of Long Cheng to see what actually was going on.

They hitch-hiked, avoiding two Lao roadblocks, and arrived at the base to report American-made planes taking off at the rate of one a minute. Presumably, the planes were to support the Royal Lao government in its fight against the North Vietnamese and Communist Pathet Lao insurgents.

After two hours, the newsmen were arrested by a Royal Lao colonel, interrogated by an American in civilian clothes—presumably CIA—and hustled out at U.S. Embassy direction on a plane bound for Vietnam, the Lao capital.

State Department officials said yesterday that the only reason the three correspondents were back safe in Vientiane was that the U.S. Embassy took the initiative in flying them out of the forbidden Long Cheng base.

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Senators Ask Facts on Role Of U.S. in Laos

By the Associated Press

With an angry attack against the American role in Laos, a bipartisan group of senators has demanded that the Nixon administration disclose how heavily the United States is involved in the war-torn Asian nation.

"The facts of our involvement have been concealed from the American people," Tennessee Democrat Albert Gore said during floor debate yesterday, a charge supported by Sen. Charles H. Percy, R-Ill.

Another Republican, Sen. Charles McC. Mathias Jr. of Maryland, said, "Laos has become an arena for the repetition of the mistakes of our Vietnamese involvement."

"I believe that the American people—and the Congress—will not ultimately accept a withdrawal policy (from Vietnam) that entails merely a changing of uniforms and titles and re-engagement in Laos."

Notes U.S. Advisers

The Maryland senator said "news reports from usually reliable publications" indicated hundreds of former Green Berets military advisers were "swarming over the country in numbers proportionately larger than the Kennedy administration commitment of advisers" in Vietnam.

The debate, conducted before only a handful of senators, came against a backdrop of a strong North Vietnamese force that has moved quickly and with great success against the Royal Lao army in spite of heavy bombings by U.S. B52s.

So far the North Vietnamese have captured the strategic Plain of Jars and the town of Muong Souk.

The fear that the American fighting role in Vietnam is fast spreading to neighboring Laos threaded through many of the arguments made in the Senate yesterday.

Cooper Cites Problem

Both Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield and Kentucky Republican John Sherman Cooper made this point, with Mansfield stating that if U.S. involvement in Laos grows "all the plans for Vietnamization will go down the drain and we will find ourselves in a most difficult situation."

Pointing to President Nixon's peace efforts in Vietnam, Cooper said "I do not see how we can get out of that situation by becoming involved in another war."

Mathias was the most vehement in his remarks. "It would be a cruel disappointment of President Nixon's hopes for peace," he said, "if success of Vietnamization in South Vietnam depends on escalation of the U.S. engagement in Laos."

Is Congress Bypassed?

He went on: "U.S. military activities in that country (Laos) clearly violate the spirit of both the National Commitments Resolution—requiring specific congressional approval for every new engagement of American troops abroad—and the amendment to the Defense Appropriations Act prohibiting use of funds for American ground combat troops in Laos or Thailand."

"Can the reservation of war powers to the Congress be circumvented by redesignating soldiers as agents of the CIA or as military advisers?" he asked.

So far, the administration has refused to disclose if Americans are serving in Laos, the rate of American air missions in that country or the U.S. casualty rate.

President Nixon has said there are no U.S. ground combat forces in Laos, although he has said American planes have hit the Ho Chi Minh Trail where it runs through that country.

Beyond that disclosure, Nixon said in a December news conference, "I do not think the public interest would be served by any further discussions."

Sen. Stuart Symington, D-Mo., who said there is no doubt of American involvement in Laos, said he had written a letter to Secretary of State William P. Rogers requesting U.S. Laotian Ambassador G. McMurtie Godley be called back to this country to testify before the Senate subcommittee on U.S. Security agreements and commitments abroad.

Symington, the subcommittee chairman, said such an appearance is needed "in view of recent press reports of serious fighting in Laos and the difficulties which have been reported by press representatives in ascertaining the facts."

Symington was referring to comments said to have been made by Godley after three reporters were ousted Tuesday from Long Chien air base in Laos for allegedly looking into secret areas.

Godley was quoted as saying "the American mission has lost any interest in helping out the press whatsoever because of what has happened this afternoon."

The State Department said late-er Godley denied making such a statement.

Mansfield came to the defense of the media, saying that the fact Laos has not yet become another Vietnam "may well be due to the persistent effort of the American press."

Symington noted that his Senate panel has been trying for four months to secure release of a censored transcript of earlier hearings on Laos so that the public would have access to the information.

During the past several weeks, Symington said, information "on the secret war in Laos" has been disclosed "by bits and pieces."

"That there is an American involvement there is no doubt. But what it is in terms of the extent of the United States activities and expenditures has never been disclosed to the American people," Symington said.

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cloud cover pictures of the whole earth daily, continuous observation of the earth and its atmosphere from synchronous orbit, and daily quantitative measurements, such as temperature and pressure, at various levels in the atmosphere.

The most significant progress has been made in the first objective—global cloud coverage—with the operation of the Tiros Operational Satellite—TOS—system.

The success of this system can be measured by the fact that satellite data is a daily required tool in hundreds of weather offices. Many users now consider the satellite essential to their environmental service missions, particularly in the West coast region of the United States where satellite pictures frequently provide the first information on developing weather off the coast where surface and upper air observations are sparse.

Other benefits include: Reduced use of aircraft for tropical storm reconnaissance, reduction of the time and cost to accomplish photo mapping of remote areas, and elimination of a costly weather-observing ship between New Zealand and Antarctica. No tropical storm—hurricane or typhoon—has gone undetected, or reached populated areas without warning for several years, due in large part to the availability of satellite data.

It is possible that this weather information may even enable us to control, or at least divert, storms and thus minimize their destructiveness.

Through the medium of the Earth Resources Program Review Committee, established by NASA during 1968, various departments of the Government assisted NASA in determining program objectives and evaluating potential applications of an earth resources program utilizing satellites.

Areas of investigation include hydrology and oceanography.

In the field of hydrology, the availability of ERTS data would permit evaluation for snowline mapping in potential flood areas such as the Upper Mississippi Valley, the Sierra Nevada, and the Northeast; observation of the extent of flooded areas; observation of the extent of river and lake ice; estimation of surface soil moisture; and estimation of maximum probable precipitation from storms.

In the field of oceanography, ERTS data would facilitate planning for the hydrographic survey of coastal waters; the location and extent of ice in inland waters and at sea; the study of estuarine mechanics; and surveillance of major ocean currents, among others.

The Department of the Interior utilizes ERTS data for its earth resources observation satellite program—EROS. Administered by the U.S. Geological Survey, EROS applies remote sensor information acquired from aircraft and spacecraft to land use and resources investigations.

The Department of the Interior is the principal resources agency of our Government. For the effective utilization and the conservation of our Nation's lands and natural resources, the space program can provide data for basic inventories of

natural resources and planning for their management.

An example of the contribution of the spacecraft to the work of the Geological Survey is the small-scale photomap acquired through photographs from space. With the addition of interpreted data from the color photos taken in the Gemini and Apollo programs, the Survey can produce such items as a geologic terrain map, a map useful in minerals exploration, and a land-use planning map.

In like manner, space vehicles will aid the resource programs of the Department of Agriculture. Joint research between NASA and USDA is directed to space systems that will be of use in the field of agriculture, forestry, and range management.

Surveys would be aimed at—identifying and measuring land use; detecting calamitous events, such as disease, insect infestation, and drought; assessing crop and timber stand conditions; and determining surface soil characteristics.

One important capability resulting from the application of remote sensing to agriculture and forest lands would be mapping of surface water, including snowpack, and identifying and mapping silt production and other water pollution sources.

Mr. President, I have mentioned only a few of the current, or near at hand, benefits of the space program. Because of it we are incalculably wiser in many ways. Now and increasingly in the future these byproducts of the "man on the moon" program will immensely enrich our life here on earth.

I share with all America great pride in the achievements of our astronauts, and the vast legacy of those achievements—a legacy made possible only through the labor and devotion of the administrators of NASA, the leaders of the Space Council, and thousands of scientists, technicians, and skilled workers—those in the contracting firms as well as in Government.

But I feel that the time has come to redirect our space objectives. For the present we should set our space sights on building an orbiting space station, supplied and managed through the use of a space shuttle system in which craft would go back and forth from earth to the space station on regular schedules and on productive missions.

Concurrently we should give considerably more attention and a much larger share of space appropriations to research which will increase supplies of food and other necessities, to preserving our life-giving environment, to reducing disaster losses, and to other earthbound problems.

A decade ago, an heroic goal—such as the man on the moon—was needed to establish order and provide objectives for the development of the building blocks essential to space capability. We now have those building blocks—and we need to drain from them all the beneficial returns possible.

It is time to focus our energies on what someone has called "inner space." When we have more nearly solved the fear-some problems presented here, it will be time to move again toward distant horizons.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLEN in the chair). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll. Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MATHIAS obtained the floor. Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield before he begins?

Mr. MATHIAS. I yield.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS DURING
SENATE SESSION

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all committees be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MANSFIELD. I thank the Senator.

ALLEGED OBSOLESCENCE OF THE
CONSTITUTIONAL WAR POWERS
OF THE CONGRESS

Mr. MATHIAS. Mr. President, there are two principal theories advanced to explain the alleged obsolescence of the constitutional war powers of the Congress.

One theory is that in the nuclear age wars may be too large and cataclysmic to be channeled through congressional processes. This may be true. But it is irrelevant to the constitutional question, since no one has challenged the Executive's authority to repel attack on the United States or to act in accordance with treaty provisions ratified by the Senate.

The other theory, beyond the belief that wars are now too big and sudden for congressional deliberation, is that in the nuclear age wars are also too small and intricate to allow a congressional role.

The big war theory has never been tested and we all passionately hope it never will be. In any case, if nuclear holocaust occurs, the survivors will not be much concerned with constitutional proprieties. The small war theory, however, has been repeatedly asserted as policy by the Executive in relation to Vietnam. And now it is being repeated in relation to the expanding conflict in Laos. Laos has become an arena for the repetition of the mistakes of our Vietnamese involvement.

The intervention in Laos has been prosecuted without congressional deliberation or authority beyond the Tonkin Gulf resolution of 1964. In fact, U.S. military activities in that country clearly violate the spirit of both the national commitments resolution—requiring specific congressional approval for every new engagement of American troops abroad—and the amendment to the Defense Appropriations Act prohibiting use of funds for American ground combat troops in Laos or Thailand. News reports from usually reliable publications indicate the presence of hundreds of ex-Green Berets, described as having joined

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the CIA in Laos because "they were fed up with having their hands tied in Vietnam." And military advisers are reported to be swarming over the country in numbers proportionately larger than the Kennedy administration commitment of advisers to the Saigon regime. The bombing of North Vietnam, which exceeded in intensity the highest levels of World War II, has now evidently been shifted to Laos.

These developments raise important questions of constitutional law. Can the reservation of war powers to the Congress be circumvented by redesignating soldiers as agents of the Central Intelligence Agency or as military advisers? Can such military actions by the CIA be accorded the clandestine status of authentic intelligence operations? By concentrating so many thousands of American officials in a small, beleaguered country like Laos—and exposing them to military peril—can the Executive in effect create an American military commitment without congressional approval and without the explicit engagement of ground combat troops? All these dubious disguises for military engagement are reportedly being used in Laos. If this is the case, each one subverts the constitutional powers of the Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. MATHIAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may continue for 3 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MATHIAS. Mr. President, I would further contend that Communist recapture of the Plaine des Jarres suggests that the intervention in Laos will not work. Every American escalation has been met by a North Vietnamese escalation. There are now said to be 50,000 North Vietnamese troops in the country. In recent weeks they were reportedly armed with antiaircraft missiles. They are evidently determined to keep open the Ho Chi Minh Trail and to counteract any substantial American gains in South Vietnam with further Communist entrenchment in Laos.

It would be a cruel disappointment of President Nixon's hopes for peace if success of Vietnamization in South Vietnam depended on escalation of the U.S. engagement in Laos. If that has become a new element of the conflict in Southeast Asia, then the American policy should be fully reappraised. For I believe that the American people—and the Congress—will not ultimately accept a withdrawal policy that entails merely a changing of uniforms and titles and a reengagement in Laos. It may well be that the weaknesses of our approach to disengagement in South Vietnam can be measured in part by the massiveness of our simultaneous military engagement in neighboring lands.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. MATHIAS. I am very happy to yield to the distinguished majority leader.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the distinguished Senator may be allowed an additional 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, may I say that I had the opportunity to read the short, to-the-point speech just made by the distinguished Senator from Maryland. I believe he is performing a service in trying to pinpoint a situation in Laos which is becoming increasingly more dangerous. The possibility of our further involvement has increased and there has been brought about a decided enlargement of the number of sorties flown over Laos, either across the Ho Chi Minh Trail or on the Plaine des Jarres. In the latter area, I understand on the basis of news reports, B-52's have for the first time been used in the past week or so.

What the Senator is endeavoring to do is bring the Congress into any decision which may be made in Laos. That is in accord with the national commitments resolution passed by the Senate by a large vote last year, and with the Cooper-Church amendment to the Defense appropriation bill, which was passed overwhelmingly, and which, as I recall, had the approval of the administration as well.

The Senator notes in his speech that—Laos has become an arena for the repetition of the mistakes of our Vietnamese involvement.

I would only amend that to express a wish and a hope, by saying that this is a possibility and not a probability at the moment.

May I say that I was surprised at the Senator's statement that there are "hundreds of ex-Green Berets" who have joined the CIA in Laos, because, as the Senator points out, if that is the case, then it is a horse of a different color, but still a horse as far as combat units are concerned.

The Senator indicates also that the bombing of North Vietnam, which has considerably exceeded the bombing in World War II in both the Pacific and the European areas, has now evidently been shifted to Laos, along the trail, the Plaine des Jarres, and elsewhere, with the cessation of the bombing in North Vietnam itself.

The Senator also brings out the fact that the Communists, the North Vietnamese, have been reportedly armed with antiaircraft missiles—I do not think there is any doubt about that—and that "they are evidently determined to keep open the Ho Chi Minh Trail and to counteract any substantial American gains in South Vietnam with further Communist entrenchment in Laos."

I would add to that the Kingdom of Cambodia as well, because it has been estimated that while there are approximately 50,000 North Vietnamese in Laos, backing approximately 25,000 Pathet Lao. There may be something on the order of 45,000 to 50,000 North Vietnamese and Vietcong in Cambodia, along the remote northern frontier extending from where the kingdom abuts on Vietnam over into the province of Battambang, which abuts on Thailand.

I have been extremely worried about the situation in Laos in recent weeks, or I should say recent months, because it is part and parcel of what developing in

Vietnam, and there has been a decided shift into Cambodia and Laos from Vietnam itself.

I was perturbed, for example, when Mr. Colby, who appeared before the Symington subcommittee last week, indicated that we would be in South Vietnam for a period of at least 5 years, and that we could possibly get out in 10 years, provided that certain circumstances occurred.

It would be my hope that a speedup in the withdrawal policy could be brought about, and that such a speedup would not be dependent upon Hanoi's stalling or Saigon's wishes, but on what would be in the best interests of this Nation.

What will happen in Laos is anybody's guess. We can either continue at our present extensive and expensive pace—I mentioned that the sorties into Laos from outside areas come in the hundreds—we can escalate, which would create a very dangerous situation; or we can withdraw, which would place the Kingdom of Laos at the mercy of other and outside forces.

I would suggest, hopefully—and I emphasize the word hopefully—that one way out of the dilemma in which we find ourselves in Laos would be, once again, to call upon the co-chairman of the Geneva accords, which in 1962 brought about the neutralization of the Kingdom of Laos by means of which the neutralists, the rightists, and the Pathet Lao would each be accorded one-third of the representation in the Laotian Parliament.

It is my understanding that the neutralists and the rightists have filled their seats and that, while the seats allotted to the Pathet Lao are vacant, the seats are still there for Souvanouvong and his followers to sit in, if they only will.

If the situation develops further as it is proceeding at the present time, it may well be that we are in for a more difficult period. If that is the case, then I think all the plans for Vietnamization and all else will go down the drain, and we will find ourselves in a most difficult and dangerous situation. I hope that will not be the case, because, as the Senator has indicated, Congress in no uncertain terms and on two occasions, has declared that it would not favor further interventions unless we were consulted—and that was one of the points which the distinguished Senator from Maryland has tried to bring out. We did so in the national commitments resolution, and under the Cooper-Church amendment, and furthermore, that we would not favor U.S. combat troops—in whatever guise—for use in Thailand and Laos.

My concern is not mitigated by the fact that casualties are accumulating week by week. I do not know how anyone can get any satisfaction out of the fact that the deaths are running under 100 a week, even though that is a reduction from what it was a year ago, when casualties were running in the hundreds a day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. MANSFIELD. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 5 additional minutes.

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FEB 25 1970

U.S. Should Resist Laos Temptation

FROM last August until last weekend, the Plaine des Jarres in north central Laos was in the hands of a special force of Meo hill tribesmen, an army which The New York Times has described as "armed, equipped, fed, paid, guided strategically and tactically and often transported into and out of action by the United States."

Last weekend, Communist troops of North Vietnam and the anti-government Pathet Lao drove the U.S.-backed forces from the plain and continued moving toward the key highway that links the administrative Laotian capital of Vientiane with the royal capital of Luang Prabang.

The struggle by the Communists to recapture the plain — they had held it for five years before last August — brought American bombers into north central Laos on a large scale. Although U.S. bombers helped the special army to capture the plain in August, they had been concentrating their efforts since then along the Ho Chi Minh Trail to the east.

With U.S. air power openly involved in the Plaine des Jarres fighting, there is new urgency now to a warning issued five months ago by Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield that Laos is in danger of becoming another Vietnam.

Our total involvement in Laos — both openly and through the secret efforts of the U.S. Cen-

tral Intelligence Agency — has reached major proportions, even though U.S. ground troops have not yet been used.

But all we have invested in money and leadership may not prove adequate to halt the Communist advance beyond the plain, and there will be a temptation to pour in still more American support if the Communists continue to move west and south toward the Mekong Valley.

WE HOPE that temptation can be resisted. At a time when we are struggling to extricate ourselves from a hopeless situation in Vietnam, it makes no sense at all to become more deeply involved in a Vietnamese neighbor largely known for elephants, pagodas and backwardness.

In Laos, we are already overcommitted, and we ought not to be drawn in any further. We ought, in fact, to be reducing our effort, just as we're doing in Vietnam. But in Laos, we cannot afford to wait until the army is "Laotianized."

It would be well if the Communists in Laos could be confined to the northeast, where they have been largely in control since World War II. But if the non-Communist Laotians are unable to keep them from moving west, that may be a reality the United States will simply have to accept.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.
CHRONICLE

M - 430,233
FEB 25 1970

Our Man Moppe

37

A Good War Is Hard to Find



Arthur Moppe

IN ORDER to keep the public well-informed on the crucial issues of the day, we present another in The Nutshell Series of Lectures. This one is entitled: "Laos in a Nutshell."

Laos, of course, is "The Key to Central Southeast Asia." Hardly anyone knows where it is. This includes the Laotians, most of whom are unaware they live in a country called Laos.

Laos has a King, who doesn't matter, and three Princes: The Right-Wing Prince Boun Oum, the Neutralist Prince Souvanna Phouma and the Left-Wing Prince Souphanouvong — a "dyed-in-the-wool Communist" who demands that everyone address him as "Your Royal Highness."

The Neutralist Prince used to rule the country. But years ago in a masterful coup, the C.I.A. threw him out and installed the Right-Wing Prince. This started a war.

The Right-Wing Prince declared himself a Bastion of Democracy. The Left-Wing Prince declared himself An Indigenous People's Uprising. But neither America nor the Communist Powers wanted to fight a war in Laos. The terrain was terrible. So, to achieve peace, the C.I.A. helped overthrow the Right-Wing Prince and re-install the Neutralist Prince.

This brings us up to 1963 and right back where we started from. Could we have a little less coughing in the back of the room, please?

★ ★ ★

WELL, NOW, the Left-Wing Prince, still angry, vowed to go on fighting the Neutralist Prince, who was busy putting down coups by the Right-Wing Prince's forces.

The Loyal Royal Army sided with the Neutralist Prince. The Pathet Lao, whoever they are, sided with the Left-Wing Prince. So they've been fighting a war for years — whenever it isn't too rainy.

Most of the time, they fight for the All-Important Plain of Jars, which is near the Strategic Plain of Reeds. One year, one side captures it. The next year the other side captures it. Hardly anyone ever gets hurt.

Both sides, of course, get financial aid from the U.S. or from the Communist Powers, either to stem the tide of Communism or Capitalism as the case may be. The Loyal Royal Army has been particularly pleased with U.S. hand grenades, which they find useful for dynamiting fish.

Unfortunately, this pleasant little crowd-pleasing war couldn't last forever.

★ ★ ★

THE C.I.A., which felt left out, organized its own army of Tough Meo Tribesmen, who grow opium poppies. To recompense their next of kin, the C.I.A. dropped bags of rice from the air on Meo villages.

The Meos carted the rice to the capital of Vientiane and sold it to black market merchants who sold it back to the C.I.A. who again dropped it on the Meo villages. A television documentary on this exchange reported that some of the rice had been dropped five times and the bags were wearing out.

But the C.I.A. Army captured the Plain of Jars. Again. So the North Vietnamese sent 10,000 or 60,000 soldiers to recapture the Plain of Jars. Again. And the U.S. sent its bombers to bomb the North Vietnamese soldiers. Again. So the war's all over the front pages. Again.

But now the gung-ho Americans are fighting the gung-ho North Vietnamese. In the cross-fire, some Laotians could easily get hurt. And to anyone who's followed this 15-year-old war carefully, that would be a real tragedy.

So that's Laos in a Nutshell. If you aren't a Communist, you can have it.

Plane Traffic Heavy At Secret Base in Laos

By Jack Foisie
Los Angeles Times

SAM THONG, Laos, Feb. 24—The long-secret base of Long Cheng in Laos was observed by outside correspondents for the first time today, and they saw American-made planes taking off at the rate of one a minute in presumed support of the battle around the Plain of Jars.

According to one of the correspondents, Tim Allman of The Bangkok Post, there also were many armed Americans in civilian clothes supporting Vang Pao, the Lao general in command of the fight in northeast Laos.

The only armed planes the correspondents saw at Long Cheng, however, were converted American prop-trainers used as bombers and flown only by Oriental pilots.

This would keep the American diplomatic position within the framework of the 1962 Geneva agreement, which forbids an outside power to base military forces within Laos.

The correspondents reached Long Cheng from Sam Thong, about 18 miles away, the logistical supply base for northeastern Laos.

They observed the area and the airfields for two hours before being challenged by a Lao colonel. They told him they thought the base was open to correspondents.

The officer reportedly at first believed the newsmen might be Russian military attaches from Vientiane.

An American in civilian clothes, believed to be a CIA agent, interrogated them and got them out as quickly as possible, putting them on an aircraft bound for Vientiane, about 100 miles south, saying he would charge them \$450 for the fare.

[G. McMurtie Godley, the American ambassador to Laos, issued a statement later, the AP reported, which said that "the American mission has lost any interest in helping out the press whatsoever because of what happened this afternoon."]

In Sam Thong, the war is 15 miles over the hills, a few minutes by helicopter or half a day's walk for Meo tribesmen. Sam Thong is certainly a most

active rear area. The activity mirrors the frantic efforts of Americans to prop up the sagging anti-Communist army of Gen. Pao.

There are more than 300 aircraft landings and takeoffs here daily. The planes must brush an escarpment to land and climb steeply on takeoff to snake out of another gap in the hills.

The dust from the dirt landing strip keeps a constant haze over the town during the daylight hours.

A bullet-nosed, high-winged monoplane lands and discharges a government soldier, 14 years old, his arm shattered by an enemy bullet. A helicopter arrives and out steps Pao, surrounded by U.S. Army and CIA advisers. A twin-engined Caribou transport plane discharges fuel in barrels.

A twin-engined Beechcraft takes off with three U.S. officers in civilian garb, headed for the battle at Muong Soui. Other light aircraft take Buddhist monks and refugees to new homes.

[American tactical air support for Laotian forces, never officially acknowledged but widely known, is believed to be mounted from bases in Thailand and South Vietnam.]

In the tin-roofed hospital, now being enlarged, Dr. James Borden of Klamath Falls, Ore., works steadily. He is the chief surgeon, assisted by two Lao doctors and by Jack Thiel of Chicago, a nurse.

There are about 150 patients, many on cots in hallways. Dr. Borden said he had treated 100 wounded from the Plain of Jars fighting but only a dozen were involved in the battle at Lima Lima, the key airstrip on the southeastern edge of the plain that fell Saturday.

The wounded who came from Lima Lima walked, Dr. Borden said. He added that if

there were many others wounded at the airstrip, they did not get out.

However, the general impression remains that the battle at Lima Lima saw Royal Lao troops retreat almost at first contact.

The man who runs Sam Thong is Edgar (Pop) Buell, who came to Laos 10 years ago and has been working in or around the Plain of Jars ever since.

Now 56, he is the U.S. aid coordinator for northeast Laos and ministers to 350,000 people, most of whom have been driven from their homes by the enemy over the years and by the rapid Communist advance of the past two weeks.

Was this refugee program the work of the United States rather than Laos?

"We are six Americans in this area and six men cannot do for 350,000 Lao. It's got to be the Lao government," Buell said.

Royal Lao Troops

Abandon Muong Soui

VIENTIANE, Feb. 25 (Wednesday), (AP)—Laotian government forces abandoned the strategic airfield-outpost of Muong Soui to the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao Tuesday night, military sources said today.

The sources said the order to abandon Muong Soui was given by Gen. Vang Pao, who commands the army of 10,000 Meo tribesmen that is the government's chief defense against the North Vietnamese offensive now moving unchecked across east-central Laos.

Vang Pao reportedly had planned to reinforce Muong Soui with a battalion of troops but changed his plans because enemy ground fire prevented his landing planes at the airstrip. Muong Soui had been defended by about a company of Meo and Lao troops.

Scources in Vientiane said they pulled out at dusk and made their way on foot toward Long Cheng, about 10 miles to the west.

Small U.S. 'Army' Seen on Laos Base

By TAMMY ARBUCKLE

Special to The Star

VIENTIANE--The United States has a small "army" of armed Americans on the ground in Laos based at Long Chien; 15 miles south of the Communist-held Plain of Jars.

This was revealed after three correspondents, Timothy Allman of the Bangkok Post, Max Coiffait of Agence France Presse and Peter Saar of Life walked 12 miles from the U.S. AID base at Sam Thong to Long Chien at various places scattered throughout Laos.

Long Chien is an L-shaped canyon tucked away in the brush. One leg of the L holds an airstrip. The other leg hides a U.S. military headquarters. Well-informed sources say the number of armed Americans on the ground totals between 200 and 300 men.

Besides these Americans, there are groups, up to company size, of Thais as well as a large number of Royal Thai air force pilots. One a Lt. Col. Kru from the 1st Royal Thai air force wing, a unit presently based at Don Muong Airfield in Bangkok, was killed at Long Chien when his C47 transport belonging to a private U.S. air company, Continental Airlines, crashed there.

This American-Thai ground presence supporting Laotians under Gen. Vang Pao, although combined with heavy U.S. Air Force strikes, has failed to stop North Vietnam's latest offensive.

Helicopters Spotted

On the 5,000-foot-long tarmac airstrip, they saw aircraft bearing U.S. Air Force markings. There also were three U.S. Air Force Jolly Green Giants, the large helicopters used for rescuing U.S. pilots downed over Laos.

The correspondents estimate they wandered around the base for two hours before being apprehended.

They said they were interrogated by an American who appeared to be in over-all charge of the area. Even a Lao colonel took orders from him, they said.

The American took Coiffait's notebook, promising to return it to him by mail. Correspondents believe the American, like others they spotted, was employed by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Estimate of Americans

The three correspondents were detained overnight at San Thong, a base north of Vientiane, by American authorities. The three had left a field tour being conducted by the U.S. Embassy after reporters protested U.S. and Lao refusal to let them see what was going on.

Besides the Americans spotted at Long Chien, informed sources say other armed Americans are

at various places scattered throughout Laos.

Well-informed sources say the number of armed Americans on the ground totals between 200 and 300 men.

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Report on Air Strip

Reliable sources today say revealed Muong Soui, a U.S. built airstrip 12 miles northwest of the Plain of Jars, fell last night to Communist forces without a fight.

According to these sources, Vang Pao's Meo troops withdrew about 5:30 p.m. local time yesterday, failing to destroy large U.S. supplies of fuel.

Vang Pao's force of about 100 men withdrew from Muong Soui because the airstrip was under North Vietnamese shellfire and fixed-wing aircraft were unable to land and bring reinforcements. A light aircraft carrying three U.S. military attaches also was unable to land.

U.S. and Lao aircraft later attempted to destroy the fuel dump, but apparently failed.

A North Vietnamese battalion entered Muong Soui on the heels of the retreating government force, sources reported, although Meo military officials said most of the Muong Soui attackers were pro-Communist Pathet Lao.

The fall of Muong Soui puts the Lao government back to its low fortunes of last July.

Position Weakened

The Laotians have now lost the Plain of Jars and Muong Soui. The only recognized neutralist area still in their hands in North Laos is Vang Vieng, 100 miles north of here.

This puts Premier Souvanna Phouma's neutralists in a poor bargaining position for Laos neutralist cabinet seats vis-a-vis Communist-supported leftwing dissident neutralists.

There apparently has been a complete military failure on the part of the Laotians since the Plain of Jars airstrip fell last Saturday.

For example, they failed to hold Phou Kout, a high mountain ridge 10 miles east of Muong Soui essential to Muong Soui's defense.

The Communists call Phou Kout "steel mountain" because of the large amounts of metal left there as a result of U.S. bombing and rockets attacks, government shelling and infantry attacks launched against it since 1954.

The Communists succeeded in holding it despite these strong attacks, fighting from 15-foot deep trenches until their logistics failed them last year.

Yet government forces gave up the position Monday after a few light probes.

Laotians Angry

Some Laotians are incensed. Lao reporters, speaking today to Chao Sopsalsana, vice president of the Lao National Assembly, for the first time bitterly questioned why their generals were seen around Vientiane bars in tennis shorts and Lao dignitaries were going to a wedding in Nepal while Laos was facing one of its worst crises.

Chao Sopsalsana said "we are not indifferent to the situation. We are seriously worried by it."

Well-informed military sources said that Lao generals had nothing to do because all reports from the northern battle area were sent direct to Souvanna Phouma and the American

command. The government's military failure despite generous U.S. military aid in equipment and air support, seems to indicate some "Laotianisation" of the war is necessary.

While Gen. Vang Pao and his Meo group pour out blood and U.S. treasure against the North Vietnamese in the mountainous areas, the Lao army remains basically in the Mekong Valley and sends Vang Pao few reinforcements.

Military officials and diplomats now are waiting to see just how far the North Vietnamese will push.

"Hanoi is in an excellent position," one source asserted "by taking Muong Soui, they threaten the left flank of Vang Pao's forces at Long Chien or can stab across the mountains to Route 13" linking Vientiane with the Royal capital of Luang Prabang.

WELCH, WEST VA.
NEWS

E-9,113

FEB 25 1970

RAY CROMLEY

Why Laos Is Not Potential Vietnam

WASHINGTON (NEA) Last month, Senate Foreign Relations Chairman J. W. Fulbright decided to serve the nation by passing on, via the Congressional Record, a dovish critic's suggestion that the "little war" in Laos might balloon into a "huge, ugly war like Vietnam."

Let's try to get that one in sensible perspective.

Laos does have the space for it. North and South Vietnam together outdo it, but its 91,000 square miles make it nearly 50 per cent larger than South Vietnam alone. (Laos is a bit smaller than Oregon.)

Population is something else. By present estimates, the combined total of the two Vietnams is 38 million people. Laos has just 2.8 million. More than half of these are hill peoples scattered all over the tangled Laotian hills. By contrast, South Vietnam's hill tribes, though they occupy 60 per cent of the nation's land, account for less than five per cent of the 18 million population total.

Certainly the total fighting force in Vietnam or adjacent backup areas like Cambodia must range between 1,750,000 and 2,000,000 men — including U. S. forces, South Vietnamese regulars and home units, the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong.

In northern Laos, where the fighting for that country is centered, it would be a surprise if total forces on both sides much exceed 200,000.

Much of the Laotian government's "fighting force" is that in name only, though sources say some units are

improved. The same goes for the Red Pathet Lao, who have been directed from the start by Hanoi and are today largely relegated to secondary, noncombat roles by the fighting North Vietnamese regulars.

Critics who like to talk of America's "secret war" in Laos make much of the presence of CIA agents, military advisers in civilian dress (most not now members of U. S. armed forces), helicopters and planes and their pilots.

Well, the scale of this activity is up some, it is known for sure. But as a phenomenon it goes back to 1954. Most of the time since then, the United States has been training, paying, advising and even directing in combat the non-Red Laotian forces.

The critics say we are "running the war." Most likely, yes. But one way or another we have been doing it for a long time. The only difference today is some advance in the number of U. S. personnel (gussed at 2,150), and some change in the scale and character of their activities.

There is no sign (indeed, much private official assurance to the contrary) that we are going to enlarge our advisory role.

We note the conceded stepup in Laos in 1968-70. But given the limiting factors of weather, haze, sporadic seasonal combat, small population, the rugged terrain in Southeast Asia's least-developed nation, the focus on the Ho trail, our air combat in Laos is being badly misrepresented by critics as threatening a huge new war.

STATOTHR

WHEELING, W.VA.
NEWS-REGISTER

E - 30,102
S - 59,244
FEB 25 1970

LOOK AT LAOS

Nixon Doctrine In Shambles?

THE NIXON DOCTRINE appears to be in shambles already while the ink is not yet dry on that massive 40,000-word Presidential message heralding a new direction for U.S. foreign policy.

Word that has leaked out about U.S. participation in the fighting in Laos tells an alarming story of our increasing role in that country's affairs. Sunday it was disclosed that an American helicopter pilot had been killed by sniper fire while ferrying supplies to beleaguered Laotian government forces on the Plain of Jars. The pilot's death was the first reported American casualty in that battle and there may have been more that we have not been told about.

There can be no argument over the fact that U.S. involvement in Laos has increased in recent weeks. There was the report of the evacuation of 18,000 peasants from the Plain of Jars by American trucks and aircraft. Then U.S. bombing raids from Thailand and South Vietnam and from the 7th Fleet afloat in the China Sea were stepped up. And the increased combat operations are being led by Laotian General Van Pao, who according to reliable news accounts, leads a collection of Meo tribesmen supplied by the American CIA. On Monday of this week the Defense Department revealed that at least 33 U.S. airmen were reported missing over Laos since early December while a Communist Pathet Lao representative in Vientiane said he had received an updated list of 191 names of American flyers reported missing in the country by the Pentagon.

How can President Nixon justify these various actions by Americans? Under what authority are U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy planes flown by American pilots bombing the Plain of Jars which is hundreds of miles from the Ho Chi Minh Trail and has nothing to do with the war in Vietnam? By what right has the CIA to join in the conduct of a full-blown war? What legal authority does the U.S. claim to allow our participation even in the smallest way in the Laotian war?

Surely it is not the SEATO Treaty? The Government of Laos itself has renounced any claim to SEATO protection. Furthermore, in the Declaration of the Neutrality of Laos in July 1962, the United States and the other powers involved said that they would "respect the wish of the Kingdom of Laos not to recognize the protection of any alliance or military coalition including SEATO."

The new Nixon Doctrine calls for a reduced role for United States forces in Asia consistent with keeping our treaty commitments. Still we have no treaty commitments with Laos but our military role there increases with each passing day. Even if the Administration refuses to confirm it Congress knows full well that American military advisers are already in the field with Laotian military units. That is precisely how the Vietnam involvement began.

Sooner or later President Nixon is going to have to come clean on what the United States is doing in Laos. Unless he is willing to cut off all ties with that conflict the American people cannot be blamed if they do not take seriously the President's promise to lower U.S. involvement in the affairs of others around the world. Another credibility gap in the White House appears in the making.

S 2206

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

February 24, 1970

WISE WORDS OF A GREAT AMERICAN

Mr. YOUNG of Ohio. Mr. President, John S. Knight, editor and publisher of the Akron Beacon Journal and the Miami Herald, is one of the Nation's most distinguished journalists. Also, he has been one of the most consistent critics of our involvement in that immoral, undeclared war in Vietnam during the Johnson administration and now during the Nixon administration.

In a recent column that appeared in the Miami Herald and other Knight newspapers entitled "Too Kind to Nixon? Well, That Depends," John S. Knight responded to criticism that he was "going a little easier on the Nixon administration than is deserving." In that column he clearly and concisely pointed out the futility of our involvement in Vietnam and the danger of that war dragging on indefinitely and expanding.

Mr. President, I believe that this column should be read by as many citizens as possible, and therefore ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the editorial was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Too Kind to Nixon? Well, That Depends
A distinguished professor of history has been kind enough to offer some commendation of JSK's Notebook.

"With the death of Ralph McGill," he writes, "the number of aggressive editors diminished and I hope you will continue your work. However, I have felt that you were going a little easier on the Nixon administration than is deserving."

Well, sir, people differ about that. Many Republicans, and especially those who read this column in the Miami Herald, appear to think that any criticism of President Nixon is tantamount to treason.

The "either you're for him or against him" dictate runs very strong in the minds of people who oversimplify the issues by automatically rejecting any view not in consonance with their own.

As an original member of the "Give Nixon Every Chance" club, I have muted my criticism on issues raised by the opposition for purely partisan reasons.

Thus, when the volatile Hubert Humphrey charged that Nixon's veto of the Health, Education and Welfare bill was a victory won "at the expense of America's children and the needy," I called the allegation "pure bosh" which of course it was.

Yet there has been no hesitancy about disagreeing with the President on matters where—at least in one man's opinion—he has been wrong.

Issue was taken here with the selection of Henry Cabot Lodge as our chief negotiator at the Paris peace talks. Cabot Lodge, a longtime friend, was too closely associated with the Saigon regime to offer any hope that he and Hanoi could ever agree on anything. Other than the shape of the peace table, that is.

Subsequent columns expressed objections to a gala inauguration since a nation at war should practice austerity; to the doubling of the President's pay and to labelling critics of the Pentagon as the "new isolationists."

We have been puzzled by Nixon's apparent acceptance of the Johnsonian dictum on "our sacred commitments" in Vietnam and the contradictions in the President's Guam and Bangkok pledges.

Nixon said at Guam that the United States would avoid future Vietnams. But at Bangkok he gave assurance that we will stand proudly with Thailand. Even the Asians found this confusing.

And then there is the "secret war" in Laos. We have printed the facts on Laos which include U.S. air support, bombing of the Ho Chi Minh trail which travels through Laos, U.S. tactical air support for the Laotian forces, U.S. advisers running the Laotian army and the loss of at least 100 American pilots on Laotian missions conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency.

We think it high time the administration came clean and told the truth about Laos, an area fraught with the same perils as Vietnam in the early 1960's.

On the lighter side, the Nixon-Agnew anti-media kick was incomprehensible. Mr. Nixon's name is included since the Vice President wouldn't even think of playing in the Bob Hope Golf Classic without White House approval.

Spiro Agnew succeeded in shaking the network presidents and he offended some overly sensitive editors and commentators. But for what purpose?

The Vice President is so elated over his oratorical successes that he is now scorching the "limousine liberals" and finding "the old lions and wolves of the Democratic party being replaced by tabby cats and lap dogs."

This is good partisan stuff and the crowds love it. What contribution it all makes to national unity or solution of the nation's pressing problems somehow escapes us.

The latest Gallup poll shows President Nixon with 66 pct. of the persons interviewed giving approval to the way he is handling his job, a rise of 7 points over his lowest rating last year.

As the most politically sensitive President since Franklin D. Roosevelt, the man in the White House has checkedmate the Democrats on every move.

He is given credit for doing his utmost to curb inflation, getting tough on pollution, urging reform of an unworkable welfare system and planning an orderly withdrawal from Vietnam.

Nixon has his political opposition in complete disarray. In commenting on the resignation of Democratic National Chairman Fred R. Harris, Columnist Mary McGrory says that "no ambitious young man would want to linger in the Democratic National Committee which can scarcely pay its telephone bills and is reduced to putting on vaudeville shows because, thanks to Johnson, the Vietnam war and the Chicago convention, there is nothing its orators can safely talk about."

Even Lyndon Johnson is, as Mary McGrory says, "rubbing salt in the wounds he inflicted on the Democratic party during his five years in the presidency."

So Dick Nixon who made it to the White House the hard way is sitting pretty over on Key Biscayne. Given a little better weather, he might even become exuberant.

We cannot forget, however, that the people and the polls are fickle. One month's applause can become next month's disaster. The Vietnam war is not ending, as so many persons choose to believe.

High interest rates are drying up expansion capital. Without the benefit of presidential jawboning on wages and prices, the cost of living indices continue to rise.

Whether inflation can ever be checked without credit and wage and price controls is at best a dubious prospect.

Other than inflation, the Vietnam war is President Nixon's gravest problem. Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird promises "steady withdrawals" beyond the 250,000 level once advocated by his predecessor Clark Clifford.

But Mr. Laird qualifies his optimism by conceding that U.S. combat troops will remain in Vietnam after American forces have given up primary combat responsibility in the war. They will remain, he said, to protect American support troops left in Vietnam to help the South Vietnamese.

In other words, another Korea where elements of U.S. combat troops have remained for 20 years. The South Vietnam situation is infinitely more complicated than Korea where an armistice of sorts does exist and the South Koreans as fighting men are far superior to the South Vietnamese.

Let Vietnam drag on interminably and public patience will wear thin. This would spell trouble for Nixon in view of his forthright pledge "to end this war in a way that would increase our chances to win true and lasting peace . . . If I fail to do so I expect the American people to hold me accountable."

As to whether I have been "easier on Nixon than is deserving" or "too critical" as some readers see it, the endeavor has been to deal fairly and objectively with an administration not long in power and still facing its most crucial tests.

Whenever thoughts of disenchantment begin to smoulder, I think of what might have been and the combusive processes come down to cool.

Mr. YOUNG of Ohio. Mr. President, John S. Knight points out how President Nixon has failed to use the Paris peace talks as an effective forum for ending the Vietnam war. While the peace talks have come to a complete standstill, young Americans daily continue to fight and die in that little faraway country of no strategic or economic importance whatever to the defense of the United States. He reiterates his disappointment that President Nixon appointed Henry Cabot Lodge to succeed Averell Harriman as our chief negotiator at Paris. Averell Harriman is a great American diplomat who succeeded in achieving the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty with the Soviet Union which his predecessors under previous American Presidents had failed to accomplish. Even though Henry Cabot Lodge was his longtime friend, Mr. Knight strongly believed the President made a bad appointment if for no other reason than that Henry Cabot Lodge on several occasions has stated that he affectionately regarded Vice President Ky as a son. This flamboyant air marshal who has stated that Hitler was his hero, fought against his own fellow countrymen seeking national liberation from the French. That Lodge had stated that Ky was like a son to him is a fact that is well known to representatives of North Vietnam and of the National Liberation Front and was a roadblock toward any possible effectiveness of Lodge as a negotiator.

John Knight also criticizes the so-called "secret war" in Laos and the very real danger of our escalating the undeclared war we are waging at the present time in that small undeveloped country that is not worth the life of a single young American.

In his column Editor and Publisher Knight states the danger that U.S. combat troops may remain in Vietnam for many years to come. Reducing the troop level in Vietnam to 350,000 or 250,000 men is not what Americans had in mind when they elected Richard Nixon to end the war.

Mr. President, John S. Knight deserves the gratitude of all Americans for his keen understanding of the issues involved in Vietnam and for his editorial efforts to help bring about an end to our involvement in the Vietnam quagmire.

LEWISTON, IDAHO
TRIBUNE

M - 21,418
S - 21,833

FEB 24 1970

The Secret War In Laos

The Nixon administration's refusal to tell the American people what their armed forces are doing in Laos may turn out to be a disastrous mistake — politically disastrous, that is, for the President.

Reports have been circulating for some months that American combat troops have been operating in support of the royal Laotian government against Laotian insurgents and North Vietnamese. The administration has denied every such report. It is well known that a number of American "advisors" are serving with the Laotian armed forces but the number and the nature of their duties have been kept secret from the American people. American pilots are flying bombing missions for the Laotian government and American mercenaries employed by companies under contract to the Central Intelligence Agency are flying troop support missions in Laos. (An American helicopter pilot engaged in this work was shot down and killed over the Plain of Jars Sunday.) All the signs point to an increasing involvement by the American armed forces in Laos and yet the administration refuses to offer the American people more than a simple denial.

Even the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee has been unable to jar the information loose. One of its subcommittees took testimony last October on the extent and nature of American military involvement in Laos. The testimony was taken behind closed doors and the State Department has refused to allow the transcript to be made public without

such heavy censoring that it would be worse than useless. The struggle between Sen. Stuart Symington, the subcommittee chairman, and the State Department over release of the transcript continues to this day. Meanwhile it has become clear as a result of recent fighting on the Plain of Jars that Americans are deeply involved in that war, but to what extent we are still not allowed to know. American reporters were not allowed to visit the Plain of Jars last week, the excuse of the CIA being that it did not have enough airplanes available to carry them there.

By pursuing this secret war, the administration is following a dangerous course. If the Laotian adventure gets out of control, as did the adventure in Vietnam, the wrath of a people who have been sent down into the swamp blindfolded is likely to destroy the administration. Even if the President can avoid a deadly escalation of the American presence in Laos, its true extent is bound to become known eventually. The governments of China, the Soviet Union, North Vietnam and Thailand presumably know all about it now. And when it becomes known the President is likely to become the target of deep and widespread resentment.

The present secrecy is doubly damaging because it makes the President look like a charlatan. Only last December, in a news conference, he said that as far as he was concerned, "the people of the United States are entitled to know everything that they possibly can with regard to any involvement of the United States abroad." — L. H.

Red Assault Expected on Key Town in Laos

BY JACK FOISIE

Times Staff Writer

VIENTIANE — North Vietnamese troops on the Plain of Jars apparently are continuing their advance and military sources here expect an attack soon on Muong Suoi, a key town at the western end of the plain.

Communist forces were probing Lao government positions at the approaches to the city, situated on strategic Route 7, which cuts across Laos from North Vietnam through the Plain of Jars. Also at Muong Suoi is an airstrip used by the government as a base for its T-28 bomber strikes against North Vietnamese troops on the plain.

The Communists took and briefly held Muong Suoi eight months ago to mark the most western advance of their 1969 offensive.

Farther West

There is speculation that the North Vietnamese army may try to push farther west this year, possibly posing a threat to the royal Lao city of Luang Prabang, 45 miles north-west of Muong Suoi.

The increased use of American bombers in support of Laos government ground troops does not appear to have significantly affected the North Vietnamese advance across the Plain of Jars military sources say.

They note that, in contrast to past years, the spearhead forces appear to be composed entirely of North Vietnamese army regulars, undoubtedly many with Vietnam war experience.

In past years, Pathet Lao units were part of the Communist striking force.

(The Associated Press reported that the Pathet Lao had demanded that Britain and the Soviet Union, co-chairmen of the Geneva conference on Laos, take "most energetic

measures to put an end to the U.S. bombings in Laos. Hanoi's Vietnam News Agency, in a broadcast monitored in Tokyo, said Phoumi Vongvichit, secretary general of the Central Committee of the Pathet Lao's Laotian Patriotic Front, made the demand in an urgent message.

Urgent Message

(The message said the United States had been "adventurously" bombing the Plain of Jars since Feb. 17.

"The Nixon Administration has reached a high degree of barbarity with its premeditated use of B-52s for intense night bombings with a view to exterminating the local population," said the message, distributed by the Pathet Lao news agency, KPL.)

The first evidence of concern that Muong Suoi might be attacked was the arrival in Vientiane of a planeload of families of prominent Lao officials in Muong Suoi.

Muong Suoi is garrisoned mainly by the so-called third force in Laos, "neutralist" soldiers. Their leaders support Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma.

When Muong Suoi fell last June, its defenders also included Thai mercenary troops hired and directed by the American CIA, although this has never been admitted officially. Whether mercenary troops are back again in Muong Suoi is not known.

The American Embassy here, whose officials have complete authority over virtually all aircraft in

Laos, has refused to allow American reporters to charter commercial aircraft to fly to Muong Suoi.

However, the embassy has authorized for today a chartered flight to Sam Thong, south of the Plain of Jars and headquarters

of some American aid efforts to Gen. Vang Pao's Miao tribesmen. Vang Pao's army, reputedly about 18,000 strong, is made up almost entirely of his fellow mountain men, and this force has borne the brunt of the current fighting.

The main attack on outlying positions defending Muong Suoi was at Xieng Lom, a small position at the head of a valley leading to Muong Suoi. The enemy was estimated at 150 men and did not push the attack when met by rifle and machine-gun fire from the outpost.

Into Perspective

STATOTHR

Last month, Senate Foreign Relations Chairman J. W. Fulbright decided to serve the nation by passing on, via the Congressional Record, a dovish critic's suggestion that the "little war" in Laos might balloon into a "huge, ugly war like Vietnam."

Let's try to get that one in sensible perspective.

Laos does have the space for it. North and South Vietnam together outdo it, but its 91,000 square miles make it nearly 50 per cent larger than South Vietnam alone. (Laos is a bit smaller than Oregon.)

Population is something else. By present estimates, the combined total of the two Vietnams is 38. million people. Laos has just 2.8 million. More than half of these are hill people scattered all over the tangled Laotian hills. By contrast, South Vietnam's hill tribes, though they occupy 60 per cent of the nation's land, account for less than five per cent of the 18 million population total.

Certainly the total fighting force in Vietnam or adjacent backup areas like Cambodia must range between 1,750,000 and 2,000,000 men—including U.S. forces, South Vietnamese regulars and home units, the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong.

In northern Laos, where the fighting for that country is centered, it would be a surprise if total forces on both sides much exceed 200,000. North Vietnam's 50,000 is the biggest single unit.

Much of the Laotian government's "fighting force" is that in name only, though sources say some units are improved. The same goes for the Red Pathet Lao, who have been directed from the start by Hanoi and are today largely relegated to secondary, noncombat roles by the fighting North Vietnamese regulars.

Critics who like to talk of America's "secret war" in Laos make much of the presence of CIA agents, military advisers in civilian dress (most not now members of U.S. armed forces), helicopters and their pilots, planes and their pilots—with the aircraft used for everything from

to dropping relief supplies to refugees (some 600,000 are reportedly on the move).

Well, the scale of this activity is up some, it is known for sure. But as a phenomenon it goes back to 1954. Most of the time since then, the United States has been training, paying, advising and even directing in combat the non-Red Laotian forces.

The critics say we are "running the war." Most likely, yes. But one way or another we have been doing it for a long time. The only difference today is some advance in the number of U.S. personnel involved (guessed at 2,150), and some change in the scale and character of their activities.

Our government will not talk about these particular things, and the critics who have intended to be boldest in their charges reveal nothing that has not gone on in one degree or another for years.

By the time Lyndon Johnson opted for a big U.S. military role in Vietnam in 1965, we already had 23,300 advisers, helicopter units and others in that country. The first of some 50 U.S. Special Forces camps was set up in the highlands in 1961, with some Americans leading the fighting as well as training the famous "Montagnards."

There is no sign (indeed, much private official assurance to the contrary) that we are going to enlarge our advisory role on the scale reached in Vietnam by 1965. Nor is there any automatic compulsion to introduce big ground force elements even if we do still more than now.

From 1965 through 1968, we flew some 360,000 sorties (often in mission groups) over North Vietnam, using fighter-bombers and a surprisingly few B-52s. The yearly sortie average was 90,000. The bomb tonnage dropped was immense.

We note the conceded stepup in Laos in 1968-70. But given the limiting factors of weather, haze, sporadic seasonal combat, small population, the rugged terrain in Southeast Asia's least-developed nation, the focus on the Ho trail, our air combat in Laos is being badly misrepresented by

U. S. CIVILIAN PILOT KILLED IN LAOTIAN FIGHT

Hit by Sniper's Bullet in Plain of Jars

VIENTIANE, Laos, Feb. 22 (AP) — An American helicopter pilot has been killed by sniper fire while ferrying supplies to Laotian government forces on the Plain of Jars, the United States embassy reported today.

A spokesman identified the pilot as J. C. Maerkl of Fort Worth, who was flying for Air America, a commercial air line under contract to the United States central intelligence agency.

Maerkl's death Thursday was the first reported American casualty in the battle which ended yesterday with a victory by North Vietnamese forces.

Reports Are Sketchy

Sketchy reports of the fighting continued to trickle into Vientiane today, more than 40 hours after the recapture of the plain by the North Vietnamese.

The embassy said Maerkl's H-34 helicopter had just lifted off after delivering supplies to the Meo forces defending Xieng Khouang air field when sniper fire hit him.

Maerkl was said to have been killed instantly. His co-pilot, John Ford, took control of the helicopter and landed it at a government airstrip, United States spokesmen said.

Account for 700

Informed sources said that of the 1,500-man government defense force that was overrun at the strategic Xieng Khouang airstrip, 700 had been accounted for and another 700 were believed to be wandering around in the hills on the edge of the plain. There were no indications of what happened to the remaining 100 defenders.

No casualty figures have been issued for either side.

Newsmen were unable to visit the battle zone. United States officials, who control air transport to the region, claimed they had no planes available to transport newsmen.

Military and diplomatic sources who have access to reports from the region said that the 50-mile by 20-mile plain was under firm North Vietnamese control.

N. Viets Take Cover

However, continued air strikes by American and royal Laotian air force planes have forced the North Vietnamese to take cover during the day in the hills flanking the plain, the sources said.

The defense of the region had been entrusted to 10,000 Meo tribesmen guerrillas, commanded by Gen. Vang Pao and financed and trained by the United States.

Western military sources said that, with control of the plain, the North Vietnamese might elect to attack Vang Pao's mountain fortress at Long Cheng or the former neutralist town of Muong Soui, which the enemy seized last summer and later relinquished.

STATOTHR

Planes Rip Reds on Plain To Stall a New Offensive

By JOSEPH FRIED

Staff Correspondent of THE NEWS

Saigon, Feb. 22—U.S. warplanes today unleashed fresh raids aimed at stalling any new Communist push to spill out of the conquered Plain of Jars in Laos and parlay Red victories there into a fullblown offensive.

Reliable sources said Yank jets hammered both North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao troops inside the plain, 100 miles from Vientiane, and lashed Red supply movements along Route 7, which skirts the northwestern edge of the plain.

Hanoi Speeds Supplies

North Vietnam was pumping the additional supplies into Laos through Barthelmy Pass in preparation for a possible new drive to the west.

The town of Muong Soui, about 25 miles from Xieng Khouang, which was overrun yesterday by tank-supported North Vietnamese troops, could be the Reds' next target.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane reported that a civilian U.S. helicopter pilot was killed Thursday by sniper fire while flying supplies to the beleaguered Laotian government forces on the plain.

Under CIA Contract

An embassy official said the pilot, J.C. Maerkl of Fort Worth, Tex., was flying for Air America, a commercial airline under contract to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Maerkl's death was the first reported American casualty in the battle for the plain, which the North Vietnamese seized Saturday.

The official said Maerkl was killed instantly as his helicopter was lifting off after having delivered supplies to the Laotian troops. The copilot, identified only as John Ford, took over the controls and landed the copter at a government airstrip.

GIs Hunt Reds Who Sprang Ambush

Saigon, Feb. 22 (UPI)—U.S. Army troops fanned out today around Tam Ky city on the northern coast, seeking North Vietnamese and Viet Cong units that inflicted heavy casualties on American forces in the area two days ago.

Troops from the Americal Division's 196th Brigade, the same unit mauled in a Communist am-



Associated Press Radiophoto

Wounded Meo guerrilla walks toward military hospital at Sam Thong, 35 miles southwest of Plain of Jars.

bush last Friday, fought a series of clashes in their sweep around Tam Ky, about 40 miles southeast of the port city of Da Nang. At least 23 Communists were killed in the operation, military spokesmen said. The brigade lost at least two dead and 11 wounded.

The Communists battled from hedgerows, bunkers and spider

holes, the same type of cover they used Friday to spring the ambush that killed 14 Americans, wounded 20 others and demolished two Sheridan tanks. U.S. losses in that battle were the heaviest in a single action in six weeks. Four Communists were known to have been killed, spokesmen said.

STATOTHR

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Reds Drive Laotians From Plain of Jars

Laos Units Shift Defense to Plain Rim

By RONALD ROSS
Minneapolis Tribune
Far East Correspondent

VIENTIANE, Laos—North Vietnamese troops overran the airfield at Xieng Khouang, Laos, Saturday and drove Laotian forces from their last positions on the Plain of Jars.

The airfield and the immediate area around it had been held by a skeleton force of 1,000 Meo hill tribe troops following the withdrawal of the main body of defenders well before the final attack, which began shortly before 1 a.m. yesterday.

United States military sources in Vientiane, the Laotian capital, estimate that 3,000 to 4,000 North Vietnamese troops were used in the final assault on the airfield.

Royal Lao government forces led by the Meo Gen. Vang Pao fell back to defensive positions on the western and southeastern rims of the plain, a high plateau 100 miles northeast of Vientiane.

The withdrawal of Vang Pao's force of 7,000 was orderly, U.S. informants said.

"Vang Pao's headquarters at Long Chen is in radio contact with all units," one informant said. "This was not a rout."

Later yesterday, however, a United States mission spokesman said that he had heard reports that on the Plain of Jars the "scene is chaos, guys running all over the plain."

Vang Pao's troops airlifted out of the northwestern corner of the plain and into Sam Thong, the area headquarters for American aid activities, were described as "bewildered."

There were also late reports that the soldiers at Muong Soui, an airfield to the west of the plain, were "getting nervous" and "feeling that they soon may be attacked."

A new element entered the picture yesterday with a report that Air America pilots may be on the verge of a strike for higher pay.

Air America is the Central Intelligence Agency-funded airline that conducts most of the air operations in Laos—dropping supplies to the Meos, inserting agents, etc.

An informant in Vientiane said that negotiations with the Air America pilots were continuing in Tokyo, Japan. He said that the American mission in Vientiane had been

Laos

assured, however, that Air America would be fully operational today and that the strike was not expected to affect current activities in Laos—at least not yet.

Reports of Vang Pao army casualties range from "some" to "may be heavy."

American mission sources in Vientiane said late yesterday that there have been no reports of any Americans

being either killed or wounded in the attack.

Vang Pao's army, known as the "clandestine army," has been a matter of some controversy in Washington, D.C., where it was revealed by U.S. Senate informants last year that it is virtually an instrument of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

U.S. Army and Special Forces advisers, many of them veterans of the war in Vietnam, also are believed to be serving as advisers at Vang Pao's headquarters at Long Chen, a few miles southwest of the Plain of Jars.

The final assault on the Xieng Khouang airfield, informants in Vientiane said, was led by a dozen or so Russian-made PT76 tanks which are part of a larger force that moved into Laos within the past two weeks from North Vietnam.

Final word of the loss of the airfield came about 2:45 a.m. yesterday when the voice of a radio operator who said he had been wounded, was heard requesting air strikes on the airfield defenders' command post and ammunition dump.

Both targets, Vientiane informants said, were attacked by "spooky" DC3 aircraft firing Gatling guns.

The royal Laotian government recently was given several of these aircraft by the United States and the Vientiane prime minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma, who also serves as minister of defense, has requested more.

North Vietnamese troops are expected to spend several days consolidating their positions around the airfield—which now is reported to be under aerial bombardment by Lao T28 propeller-driven bombers and American jets flown in from Thailand.

The next Communist objectives appear to be the airfield at Muong Soui and the towns of Long Chen and Sam Thong.

All three are expected to come under rocket and mortar attack very soon if such attacks have not already begun.

The Vang Pao-CIA base at Long Chen was the target of a small attack last Wednesday.

At that time a small group of sappers attempted to get on to the airstrip and destroy the Lao T28s parked there for the night.

Three of the North Vietnamese sappers, two of them wearing Lao army uniforms, were killed. One Lao T28 was destroyed by explosives.

U. S. military informants in Vientiane say that they expect that within the next two to three weeks North Vietnamese troops will have accomplished most if not all of the objectives of the current phase of their Plain of Jars campaign. Certainly, these informants say, the Souvanna Phouma government is in no position to retake the plain, which to all intents and purposes now is in North Vietnamese hands this dry season. Nor can

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gon Daily News, the English-language newspaper which supported him was put out of business by Thieu and Ky. No wonder a majority of the people of South Vietnam are allied with and supporting the National Liberation Front, or VC.

U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN LAOS

Mr. FULBRIGHT. Mr. President, our involvement in Laos continues to be hidden from the American people.

Although President Nixon has referred to his 119-page report on "United States Foreign Policy for the 1970's" as "the most comprehensive statement on foreign and defense policy ever made in this country" it contains no mention whatsoever of Laos.

The newspapers of February 19 which carried articles on President Nixon's report also included a story about American B-52's bombing the Plain des Jarres in Laos.

The American people should not be treated in this manner. Once again the President has failed to inform the public about our activities in Laos. Once more the policy of secrecy is preventing the public from being informed about a war that is slowly but steadily escalating.

A recent editorial in the *Paragould, Ark., Daily Press* opposes the "secrecy" policy. The editorialist writes:

Won't we ever learn?

The U.S. got involved in the tragedy that is Vietnam because of failure to hold open debates in Congress on our involvement there, and partly through entanglements brought on by the operations of the CIA.

We cannot afford to let Laos and/or Thailand become Vietnam all over again.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the editorial from the *Paragould Daily Press* of February 4, 1970, be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the editorial was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

NO SECRETS

Just before their Christmas break, the U.S. Senate held a secret session to talk about U.S. military involvement in Laos and Thailand.

Week before last, more than a month later, a heavily-censored report of that meeting was released. It told us little about the extent of our involvement, and nothing about our casualties.

Sen. J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, did have a statement in the published excerpts—that "this is escalating into a major operation."

Fulbright's comment should be enough to scare anyone, even the hawks. Concerned senators pushed through an appropriations bill amendment to bar defense funds for U.S. ground combat troops in either Laos or Thailand.

That, however, is little comfort.

Everyone seems to know there is a strong U.S. "military presence" in Laos and Thailand. Anyone, at least who watches Bob Hope's annual Christmas show. In the 1969 version Hope, you will recall, commented on the "highly secret" mission of some units.

Many published reports, too, have told of U.S. air operations in support of Laotian troops. "Private" airlines, financed from CIA funds, reportedly supply arms, ammunition, and food to Royal Laotian troops.

U.S. Air Force bases in Thailand admittedly are used as operational points for raids on the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos.

There have also been substantial reports about U.S. personnel engaged in anti-guerrilla operations.

Won't we ever learn?

The U.S. got involved in the tragedy that is Vietnam because of failure to hold open debates in Congress on our involvement there, and partly through entanglements brought on by the operations of the CIA.

We cannot afford to let Laos and/or Thailand become Vietnam all over again!

REVOLUTION OF HOPE IN INDIA

Mr. EAGLETON. Mr. President, when, in this age of megatons and megawaste, technology produces some tangible and unmitigated human progress, we ought to pause and savor it.

The "Green Revolution" which has occurred during the last 3 years in India and other developing nations appears to be one of these rare and hopeful occurrences.

And, while most of the credit goes to the governments and people of the countries involved, Americans were there when it happened. We were there with nearly two decades of economic assistance. We were there with food in times of scarcity. We were there with the unrelenting work of private organizations like the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and many of our great American universities, whose agronomists helped cause this revolution.

On February 6, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* carried an editorial summarizing this historic event, and I ask unanimous consent that the editorial be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the editorial was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

REVOLUTION OF HOPE IN INDIA

Without much fanfare except in the technical journals, a revolution of vast consequences has been occurring in India. For once it is peaceful and constructive, and it has certain counterparts throughout Asia. It is a revolution in the production of food grains which has brought India from the brink of starvation to a point of relative abundance in a few short years, and which has in the process revealed new facets of the Indian character.

As a detailed report of the Rockefeller Foundation makes clear, Indian subsistence farmers were supported to be "too sluggish, too unintelligent, too tradition-bound" to use new technologies even if handed them. But given something better to work with, these farmers "amazed not only their own government but the rest of the world." The speed with which they reacted, says the report, has never been duplicated on an equal scale anywhere else, including the agriculturally sophisticated United States.

The perceptive report was written by Carroll P. Streeter, for many years editor of the *Farm Journal*, who found that while India's approach to self-sufficiency in food is of key significance, "The real revolution is the one that has happened, not to farming but to farmers—the revolution of hope. It has meant a new concept of self, in which the farmer can believe he may fulfill his destiny as a liberated human being."

In the case of one crop wheat Mr. Streeter notes that the seasons of 1966-68 and 1968-69 saw the worst drouths in 40 years forcing India to import 10 million tons to avert

hunger and in some instances starvation. Yet today the Indus and Gangetic plains of northern India and of neighboring West Pakistan "are one vast carpet of beautiful wheat—short stiff-strawed thick in stand as level as though just mowed, heavy with big heads loaded with plump kernels . . . nothing less than miraculous."

The miracle was wrought by scientists who mixed wheat strains from various parts of the world to fit Indian growing conditions. And they have made similar progress in rice, corn, sorghum and millets. The Indians, along with wheat breeders in other countries, are working on a wheat-rye cross called "tritica," the first man-made species of grain with large commercial potential ever created.

Mr. Streeter credits four developments for the success of the revolution: New germ plasm which has given Indian plant breeders an abundance of material from which to breed more productive varieties of cereal grains; agricultural "inputs" such as irrigation water, fertilizer, pesticides and farmer credit; increased production of farm experts by state agricultural universities, and government-set price floors.

Having depicted the miracle, Mr. Streeter cautions against too much optimism as to the overall Indian economy, the reason being the birth rate. India's food supply is gaining at a rate of 4 per cent annually and has the capability of going to 5 per cent; about a million people a month are being added to the population, which now is estimated at 540,000,000.

What India has won is an important breathing spell and a period of a few years—perhaps as many as 10—in which to slow down the population growth while pushing food production ahead still faster. India has made small progress with birth control, but maybe, like the farmers and the new technology, the Indian people only need to be persuaded of its value. India cannot hope for long-range self-sufficiency in food until population growth is under control, and it is well that New Delhi is intensifying efforts along that line.

TAX RELIEF FOR THE ELDERLY UNDER THE TAX REFORM ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of New Jersey. Mr. President, the Tax Reform Act of 1969, which was signed into law in December, was a significant step forward in providing more equitable tax treatment for individual taxpayers.

Several provisions in the new law, including a number of proposals which I have advanced, will also provide urgently needed relief for elderly taxpayers. This is especially gratifying to me, since tax relief for older Americans has been one of my major concerns.

In December, the Senate Committee on Aging, of which I am chairman, prepared a memorandum to assist elderly taxpayers in understanding the recent changes in the tax law which will be of particular benefits to them. This memorandum presents the information in a concise, readable fashion, and should be very helpful to older persons.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of this memorandum be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the memorandum was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

TAX REFORM AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The Senate and the House of Representatives adopted a compromise conference report on the tax reform bill by overwhelming votes on December 22, clearing the measure for the

February 19, 1970

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

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Biscayne. That was how the Nixon administration had come to treat the man it had appointed to be Director of the Office for Civil Rights at HEW and who had thought he was speaking for that administration in his lobbying efforts against the Stennis proposals. Mr. Panetta got the word more or less when everybody else did. And just a few days later, he got another word: he was told to get out.

The ironies are rather stunning. In a law-and-order administration (so-called), the Attorney General goes into court to try to get legal sanction for continued violation of the law on the part of several Mississippi school districts; the Supreme Court responds with a sweeping order for the offending districts to "do it now"; the man (Mr. Panetta) who was trying to get such districts to go along in the first place, is fired. What compounds the irony is that without the Attorney General's ridiculous and ill-fated effort to get his clients a little more time (they had had 15 years) and without his astonishing failure to perceive the probable response of the court, there would have been no such sudden or sweeping order. The push-pull, piece-meal, bit-by-bit negotiation that Mr. Panetta and others were pursuing would surely have spared the South its present agony and had the virtue of according with law as well. But Mr. Panetta has become a scapegoat for the misjudgment of others in the administration—and he, not they, has paid the price.

Watch what we do—the Attorney General said a while back on the subject of civil rights—not what we say. We will concede that his directive has some merit: it is a whole lot easier to watch the administration's actions these days than it is to keep tabs on its whirlwind of issue-straddling, contradictory statements. So we have been watching what they do. They have lent their prestige to the effort to circumvent the Supreme Court's ruling that the state may not deliberately segregate children on the basis of their race, and they have fired Leon Panetta, because he wouldn't go along.

PRESIDENT NIXON'S WATER CLEANUP PROGRAM SOUND

Mr. GRIFFIN. Mr. President, the President has said that the task of cleaning up our environment calls for a total mobilization by all of us if we are to succeed in restoring the kind of environment we want for ourselves and that our future generations deserve to inherit.

While many aspects of returning to a clean environment will take years to achieve, today we have the technology and the resources to proceed on a program of swift cleanup of pollution from the most acutely damaging sources: municipal and industrial wastes.

Since the Clean Waters Restoration Act of 1966 was passed, Federal appropriations for constructing municipal treatment plants have totaled only about one-third of congressional authorizations. Because of the congestion of municipal bond markets, some municipalities have experienced difficulties in selling issues for waste treatment facilities.

If we are to make an effective assault on cleaning up our dirty waters, the Federal Government must provide a means by which those municipalities that cannot tap the municipal bond market on reasonable terms can finance their share of the cost.

The President's environmental message to this Congress estimates that it

will take a total capital investment of about \$10 billion over a 5-year period to provide the municipal waste treatment plants needed to meet our national water quality standards. This would provide every community that needs it with secondary waste treatment and also special additional treatment in areas of special needs.

The President has proposed a two-part program of Federal assistance: Clean Waters Act with \$4 billion to be authorized immediately in fiscal year 1971 to cover the full Federal share of the total \$10 billion cost on a matching fund basis. This would be allocated at \$1 billion a year for the next 4 years, with a re-assessment in 1973.

Creation of an Environmental Financing Authority, to insure that every municipality eligible for Federal grants has an opportunity to sell its waste treatment plant construction bonds.

If conditions of the bond market are such that a qualified municipality cannot sell a waste treatment plant construction issue on reasonable terms, EPA will buy it and will sell its own bonds on the taxable market. The difference between the rate which EPA must pay private investors and the rate it receives from local governments on their securities will be made up by the Treasury Department. However, the Government would be able to recoup most, if not all, of this differential through the taxes it will receive on interest on EPA bonds. Consequently, construction of pollution control facilities will not be delayed by a city's inability to raise funds in its own name, but will depend rather on its waste disposal needs as it should.

Mr. President, I am hopeful that both Houses of Congress will support this approach toward assuring adequate financing of sewage treatment facilities.

THE AMERICAN ROLE IN LAOS CONTRADICTS NIXON DOCTRINE

Mr. CHURCH. Mr. President, fighting has resumed on the Plain of Jars in Laos.

According to recent press reports, that means that U.S. involvement has also increased. This involvement includes—and I emphasize that I am only quoting published accounts in reputable newspapers—first, the evacuation of 18,000 peasants from the Plain by truck and aircraft; second, stepped up U.S. bombing raids from bases in Thailand and South Vietnam and from the 7th Fleet afloat in the China Sea; third, stepped up combat operations by Laotian General Vang Pao who, according to newspaper reports, leads a collection of Meo tribesmen supplied by the CIA.

What is the legal authority for these operations?

Where, in the admittedly broad legislative authority for the CIA, is it contemplated that that Agency may conduct a full-blown war?

Under what authority are U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy planes, flown by American pilots, bombing the Plain of Jars which is hundreds of miles from the Ho Chi Minh Trail and has nothing to do with the war in Vietnam?

There is a statutory basis for our support of local forces in Laos and Thailand, but nowhere do I find authority for American personnel to engage in combat operations.

Indeed, not the least of the paradoxes of this curious war in Laos is that not only is there no legal basis for it, there is affirmative legal prohibition against it.

Not in Laos can the solemn obligations of the SEATO Treaty be put forth as a legal underpinning for an American war.

On the contrary, the Government of Laos has itself renounced any claim to SEATO protection. Further, in the Declaration of the Neutrality of Laos in July 1962, the United States and the other powers principally involved, said that they would "respect the wish of the Kingdom of Laos not to recognize the protection of any alliance or military coalition, including SEATO."

Beyond this, the United States and the other powers agreed, in the protocol to this declaration, that "the introduction of foreign regular and irregular troops, foreign paramilitary formations and foreign military personnel into Laos is prohibited."

What sense does it make to say that the North Vietnamese violated the protocol first and that we will not admit our violations if they do not admit theirs? How do you suppose this impresses the wives and parents of the 150 American airmen estimated by the Pentagon to be missing, captured, or dead?

Finally, how does all of this square with the Nixon doctrine, which calls for a reduced role for U.S. forces in Asia consistent with the keeping of our treaty commitments? In Laos, where the United States has no treaty commitments, we are enlarging our military role—or at least so we are told by the press.

It is time the American people heard the truth—and the whole truth—from their Government.

It is time, too, that the executive branch upheld its end of the Constitution of the United States, conferring directly with the Congress on matters of war and peace, instead of making concealed end-runs around the legislative process. It is the constitutional right of Congress to determine where and how public money is spent, which was the purpose of my amendment to last year's military appropriation bill, prohibiting the use of any U.S. money to introduce American ground combat troops into either Laos or Thailand.

Mr. President, I ask for unanimous consent to have printed in the Record at this point several recent news stories commenting on our involvement in Laos.

There being no objection, the articles were ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 15, 1970]

LAOS AIDE FEARS LOSS OF PLAIN SOON

Laos may have to abandon its strategic Plain of Jars to North Vietnamese forces "in a matter of a week" if the attackers keep up their pressure, a Laotian military spokesman said yesterday.

North Vietnamese troops have recently captured at least a dozen outposts controlling access to the plain from the northeast and the Xieng Khouang airfield was reported under new attack by six Hanoi battalions.

HUTCHINSON, KAN.
NEWS

D - 51,412

S - 52,581

FEB 19 1970

Editorial

Are We at War in Laos?

The reports from Laos and the words in Washington differ widely.

So much so a disturbing question comes: are we clandestinely moving toward war in Laos?

More bluntly: are we already at war in Laos?

The reports of U. S. involvement come from U. S. newsmen and reporters of other countries; from relatives of troops in the area, and even from such sources as the touring Bob Hope Christmas show.

Reports now are coming from Congress. The Senate Foreign Relations committee last week obtained evidence which Sen. Albert Gore says reveals our intervention in Laos has been "secretly but greatly escalated."

Another committee member, Sen. Stuart Symington, this week demanded disclosure to the Senate of details on which the administration has been either mum, or less than candid.

The threat to the American people is two-fold. One is that the secret moves of our government will proceed without adequate, or any, Congressional debate — until it's too late.

This is basically the tragedy of Vietnam.

The second threat is that military commitments can lead to political commitments, and have. This is the present danger. No one denies that the CIA and Air Force are providing munitions, food, and other supplies. Such military help can involve us in all-out war.

Can we avoid that? Perhaps, if we take some immediate steps:

1. Pull our own military forces out of Laos, including the Air Force, the CIA-hired mercenaries and others.

2. Provide Congress full information and, through Congress, tell the public what really is going on.

These actions might well mean that Laos would be taken over by the Communist Pathet Lao. This would be a loss.

But it would be far less loss than our direct intervention and another futile, costly war, 10,000 miles away.

And at the least, the American people should have full awareness of the odds before we tumble into another bottomless pit.

STATOTHR

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.
TRIBUNEM - 240,275
S - 674,302
FEB 19 1970

U.S. Plays a Heavy Military Hand in Laos

From an article by Arnold
Abrams in the Far Eastern
Economic Review
(Hong Kong)

Vientiane, Laos.

THE American people have yet to be told by their government that their nation is militarily involved in Laos. American officials still seek to conceal U.S. violations of the 1962 Geneva Accord, which bars all forms of foreign military intervention in Laos.

They contend that Hanoi's refusal to concede the presence of North Vietnamese troops here makes it diplomatically unfeasible for the United States to act otherwise.

Consequently, everyone in Vientiane, from the Russian ambassador to the mamasan of the legendary White Rose, knows what the Americans are doing here. But the American public remains ignorant of the fact that their government is arming, training, supplying, transporting and directing approximately 70,000 Laotian troops in a war which threatens to get out of hand.

INSTEAD of setting the record at least partially straight, U.S. officials here do things like allowing Gen. Vang Pao to declare recently, before a sizable contingent of visiting journalists, that his Meo forces fight with antiquated weapons, inadequate com-

munications and inconsequential American support.

As he was speaking, American F4 Phantom jets roared overhead, several American observation planes were parked nearby and three cargo-laden American transport planes landed in quick succession at his official Sam Thong base.

AFTER denying he even received indirect U.S. military support, Vang Pao calmly climbed into an unmarked American helicopter, guarded by Laotian troops carrying American-made M16 automatic rifles, and was flown back to his secret headquarters by a three-man American crew.

Vang Pao and official verbiage notwithstanding, American involvement in the Laotian conflict takes the following principal forms:

In addition to 75 military advisers listed as embassy "attaches," about 300 men are employed in a variety of clandestine military activities supervised by the CIA. Although technically civilians, many CIA agents in Laos are former Special Forces soldiers recruited because of military expertise and Vietnam experience.

THESE ex-Green Berets train government troops, assist wide-ranging reconnaissance teams and plan guerrilla and psychological warfare operations. They wear combat fatigues and work out of three main camps, where they administer rigorous training in jungle warfare, guerrilla tactics, communications handling and weaponry.

The CIA also maintains and largely controls Vang Pao's army of approximately 15,000 full-time troops. Official instructions to the contrary, CIA personnel occasionally accompany these forces on combat forays. More than 20 agents have been killed in Laos.

LEARNING about these activities prompted Sen. Fulbright to raise a key question about the CIA's role here: Since its function ostensibly is to gather information, why is this agency running a war in Laos?

"I don't approve of this kind of activity at all," Fulbright said, "but if it is in the national interest to do this, it seems to me it ought to be done by regular

U.S. Army forces and not by an intelligence-gathering agency." He added that the National Security Act, which created the CIA, "never contemplated this function" for the agency.

Cargo and military supplies — as well as personnel — are ferried throughout Laos by Air America and Continental Air Services, private charter firms under contract to the U.S. government. They are better known as the "CIA Airlines," and most pilots are ex-Air Force officers.

THE SUM total of American assistance here is reliably estimated at between \$250 million and \$300 million per year. Of that, only the technical aid budget — about \$60 million — is made public. The rest, undisclosed, goes almost entirely for military purposes.

U.S. officials here stress that American money and manpower expenditures in Laos are minuscule compared to those in Vietnam. Less than 200 U.S. personnel — mostly airmen — have been killed in Laos. A small conflict fought by volunteers may not be laudable, they say, but it beats a big bloody one by draftees.

PERHAPS, but what happens when a little war threatens to escalate into a huge, ugly one like Vietnam?

A top embassy official in Vientiane argues: "There is no chance of turning this into another Vietnam. We know the mistakes made in Vietnam and we have no intention of repeating them. Hanoi understands our position here. We seek no wider war."

Does it sound familiar?

B-52's Reported Diverted to Support Laotian Forces

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Feb. 18 (AP)—Informed sources reported today that B-52 bombing raids in South Vietnam had been halted for 36 hours while the planes, the biggest bombers the United States has, went into action for the first time against North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao troops threatening the Plaine des Jarres in Laos.

The United States Command refused to comment on the report, but its communiqués did not report any B-52 strikes in South Vietnam during the 36 hours that ended at noon today.

Smaller American fighter-bombers were reported to have attacked North Vietnamese forces around the Plaine des Jarres on Sunday. B-52's are used frequently in Laos against North Vietnamese supply depots that feed troops and war matériel into South Vietnam. But this was the first report of their use in direct support of Laotian Government forces.

The Laotian forces captured the Plaine des Jarres in the summer and North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces opened an offensive last week to retake the plain, a strategic transport hub.

Laotian Air Base Attacked

Special to The New York Times

VIENTIANE, Laos, Feb. 18—North Vietnamese supported by tanks mounted their fourth major attack against the airfield in the Plaine des Jarres last night.

Laotian military authorities said 36 North Vietnamese had been killed in the fighting and one North Vietnamese lieutenant had been captured. The North Vietnamese officer was flown to Vientiane today.

Reliable sources said Communist troops also attacked last night at Longcheng, a Central Intelligence Agency base southwest of the plain that

serves as the headquarters of Gen. Vang Pao, commander of United States-supported Meo tribesmen.

The attack, said to be the first on the base in the Laotian war, was described as a commando raid. One United States observer plane was said to have been destroyed.

Attack Is Minimized

The sources characterized the raid as "not serious." They said that three North Vietnamese had been killed and one Laotian guard wounded. The

rest of the attacking squad of about a dozen men escaped.

The fighting at the Plaine des Jarres airfield, sometimes called Xiengkhouang for the town of that name 14 miles to the southeast, appears to have become a battle of attrition around the last major Laotian Government position on the plain, with United States firepower pitted against North Vietnamese infantry, and the reinforced Laotian garrison acting as bait.

Laotian Government casualties during the fighting for the

airfield, which lasted from dusk until dawn, were described as "light."

With most of the rest of the plain fallen to the North Vietnamese, one diplomatic source today called the strategy "disturbingly reminiscent of Dienbienphu," and said that the ultimate success of the Laotian-American effort would depend on how efficiently United States aircraft could evacuate the airfield, where most of the United States-supported troops and equipment are concentrated.

DETROIT, MICH.
FREE PRESS

M - 530,264

S - 573,254

FEB 18 1970

As We See It

U.S. Is Dangerously Near A New Vietnam in Laos

THE WIRE service teletypes report in staccato prose that 400 American fighter-bombers zeroed in on the Plain of Jars in eastern Laos, providing air support for the beleaguered Laotian Army.

One, a propeller-driven Skyraider, was shot down and its pilot presumed killed.

What the teletypes did not report, supposedly because everyone knows it, is that each flight by an American pilot is one more violation of the 1962 Geneva Accords. This agreement, an attempt to restore the same kind of peace to Laos that Vietnam was supposed to get after the 1954 Geneva Accords, provides that Laos is to remain neutral and that foreign powers are prohibited from sending armed forces into Laos.

Our answer, of course, is that North Vietnam has troops in Laos supporting the Pathet Lao, the rebel army trying to overthrow the official government in Vientiane.

This is not an answer, but merely an extension of the domino theory that got us so deeply and unwisely involved in Vietnam. It is an answer that can satisfy only the Curtis LeMays of this world who want to bomb little brown men "back to the stone age."

For while we are trying to Vietnamize Vietnam, we are in danger of Americanizing Laos. And the American people are not being told how deeply we are involved

or how deeply the President is willing to get us involved. We do not even know, beyond the Geneva Accords, what our "commitments" are, or what secret treaties might have been negotiated.

A Senate subcommittee, in response to public pressure, heard administration testimony on our involvement, but the hearing was secret. President Nixon has refused to allow anything but a mutilated transcript to be released. Sen. Stuart Symington, the subcommittee chairman, has refused to release the mutilation because, he feels, it would mislead the public rather than inform them.

We know, from the military reports, that American planes with American pilots are fighting in Laos. We know that CIA agents are on hand, and assorted other American "advisers." We don't know how many helicopter pilots are ferrying Laotian troops or how many Laotian soldiers are, in effect, being led by American commander/advisers.

What we do know is that this is the way we got involved in Vietnam—in small stages after small and secret commitments, until we were involved in a big war through the tyranny of small decisions.

The President promised during his campaign that there would be "no more Vietnams." The people not only accepted him at his word, but since have made it clear that they want out. Moving Vietnam next door is not the way to do it.

WASHINGTON STAR
18 Feb 1970

Laos Forces Kill 36, Destroy 3 Hanoi Tanks

By TAMMY ARBUCKLE
Special to The Star

VIENTIANE — North Vietnamese forces, spearheaded by tanks, launched new attacks on the airstrip headquarters of Lao government Gen. Vang Pao on the Plain of Jars this morning, but they were beaten back.

Thirty-six North Vietnamese were killed and three tanks were destroyed, according to military sources here.

Hanoi's infantry stormed the airfield perimeter in a dense fog, and four tanks penetrated the field's defenses.

3 Tanks Destroyed

Three of the tanks fell into newly dug anti-tank ditches around the airstrip and were destroyed by point-blank cannon fire.

Government casualties were described as light though neither U.S. or Lao airpower were able to intervene because of the bad weather.

(Reports out of Saigon indicated, however, that American B52s were bombing elsewhere in Laos in an attempt to curb the drive by the North Vietnamese and Communist Pathet Lao.)

Air gunships, however, illumi-

nated the battle with flares.

The action was the fourth Hanoi attempt to take the airstrip, one of the few remaining positions in Lao government hands after Hanoi captured most of the Plain of Jars in a series of attacks since Thursday.

CIA Post Attacked

In an attack last night, a 10-man North Vietnamese sapper team firing automatic weapons and using satchel charges briefly overran Long Chien, the U.S. and Lao government headquarters south of the plain run by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

One American Air Force plane, an O1E used for reconnaissance purposes was broken in half by a satchel charge and one Mco tribesmen sentry was killed.

Three North Vietnamese, two of them dressed in Lao government uniforms, also were killed. U.S. Air Force Skyraiders, said to be based at Long Chien at Muong Soui on the northwest part of the plain, have been bombing the plain daily.

At least one Skyraider has been downed and a U.S. pilot killed, informed sources said.

Ex-volunteer raps center, AID

To the Daily Egyptian:

I would like to identify myself as one who is against SIU's Center for Vietnamese Studies and give my reason. My opposition is based on the source of funding.

A.I.D., known also as AID, or the Agency for International Development is the United States foreign assistance program. This organization for assisting developing countries probably conjures up images of humanitarian work...the people of the U.S.A. helping the poor people of other nations. But, even so, the program has not been popular here. A Newsweek poll late in 1969 showed that most middle class Americans desired to have foreign aid expenditures reduced. But the AID budget has not been cut. Our government continues to operate foreign assistance programs. And AID is also funding for one million dollars the SIU Center for Vietnamese Studies.

I wonder what lies at the root of the American peoples' dissatisfaction with our foreign aid program? Perhaps the start was a little book in the 1950's entitled, "The Ugly American." And perhaps the continued accounts of wasted money, corruption, incompetent technicians and the failure of AID to accomplish two things: 1) To raise the standard of living of people in developing nations, and 2) To effectively gain political (anticommunist) friendships for the United States. Our foreign aid program has failed to meet those two objectives. Perhaps Americans are right to desire the reduction of such a wasteful and nonprofitable program. We aren't getting anything for our money.

It is interesting to look beyond this to the kind of monstrous bureaucracy that really is AID. The Agency for International Development is a part of the Department of State. This is the place where U.S. policy is formulated. It follows that AID is primarily a political tool for the implementation of U.S. policy. Incidentally, the military is likewise a tool for the implementation of U.S. policy. The political objectives of AID and the military are the same. Thus, if you find it difficult to stomach U.S. military action in Viet Nam, you would probably get ill from what AID is doing there...if you knew what was really going on. (AID in Viet Nam was supposed to "win hearts and minds" of the Vietnamese population. This program, aptly named WHAM, was the well-known pacification attempt. It isn't working because you can't buy friendship except the friendship of corrupt people. Yet, the give-away is the main device of AID programs everywhere.)

Does it surprise you that AID is indeed a cover for the CIA? I personally saw rosters printed by AID which listed CIA personnel as AID employees!

You'll probably ask where I get my information. It comes from personal experience. For two years I served as a volunteer in a Southeastern Asian country which had the highest

per capita (recipient population) U.S. foreign aid budget in the world. I saw what AID is like. Unfortunately, it has not changed much since the time "The Ugly American" was written. In 1968 AID spent 58 million dollars in Laos. Very little of it has reached and helped the Lao people. In addition, American AID has not been effective in winning political friendships among the Lao people—the country today is more than three-quarters controlled by the communists.

The above information might be enough to make quite a few folks want to throw out AID entirely. Maybe that should be done. The more pertinent question, however, is the relevance of AID to the University's Center for Vietnamese Studies. AID financing always has strings attached. This is true whether the recipient is a foreign country or a university like SIU. The center's spokesman asserts like a broken record that "the center is academic and objective!" Anybody with any horsesense knows that whoever supplies the money, pulls the strings and the puppet dances. The center is such a thing dangling on the strings of AID; it is impossible to be otherwise.

Finally, we can examine the center's record for objectivity. Of all the personnel they've hired, of all the speakers whom they've brought on campus there has been only one individual who represents antiwar interests. This was Dr. Joseph Elder, a Quaker and a sociologist. And why is it that a man like Elder has not been appointed with Dr. Hoa and the hawkish Dr. Fisher? Is this "academic objectivity?"

In last Tuesday's Daily Egyptian, the headline read, "Protest threatens academic freedom, claims MacVicar." And do you deny, Chancellor, that funding by AID does not threaten academic freedom?

Mark Bordsen
Graduate student

...returned volunteer.

STATOTHR

FREDERICK, MD.
POST

M - 13,133

FEB 17 1970



Why Laos Is Not Potential Vietnam

By BRUCE BLOSSAT
NEA Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NEA)

Last month, Senate Foreign Relations Chairman J. W. Fulbright decided to serve the nation by passing on, via the Congressional Record, a dovish critic's suggestion that the "little war" in Laos might balloon into a "huge, ugly war like Vietnam."

Let's try to get that one in sensible perspective.

Laos does have the space for it. North and South Vietnam together outdo it, but its 91,000 square miles make it nearly 50 per cent larger than South Vietnam alone. (Laos is a bit smaller than Oregon.)

Population is something else. By present estimates, the combined total of the two Vietnams is 38 million people. Laos has just 2.8 million. More than half of these are hill peoples scattered all over the tangled Laotian hills. By contrast, South Vietnam's hill tribes, though they occupy 60 per cent of the nation's land, account for less than five per cent of the 18 million population total.

Certainly the total fighting force in Vietnam or adjacent backup areas like Cambodia must range between 1,750,000 and 2,000,000 men—including U.S. forces, South Vietnamese regulars and home units, the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong.

In northern Laos, where the fighting for that country is centered, it would be a surprise if total forces on both sides much exceed 200,000. North Vietnam's 50,000 is the biggest single unit. Some 10,000 Meo tribesmen on the government side have been holding the strategic Plain of Jars and may now have to yield it under new Red pressure.

Much of the Laotian government's "fighting force" is that in name only, though sources say some units are improved. The same goes for the Red Pathet Lao, who have been directed from the start by Hanoi and are today largely relegated to secondary, noncombat roles by the fighting North Vietnamese regulars.

Critics who like to talk of America's "secret war" in Laos make much of the presence of CIA agents, military advisers in civilian dress (most not now members of U.S. armed forces), helicopters and their pilots, planes and their pilots—with the aircraft used for everything from combat support of government armies to dropping relief supplies to refugees (some 600,000 are repeatedly on the move).

Well, the scale of this activity is up some, it is known for sure. But as a phenomenon it goes back to 1954. Most of the time since then, the United States has been training, paying, advising and even directing in combat the non-Red Laotian forces.

The critics say we are "running the war." Most likely, yes. But one way or another we have been doing it for a long time. The only difference today is some advance in the number of U.S. personnel involved (guessed at 2,150), and some change in the scale and character of their activities.

Our government will not talk about these particular things, and the critics who have intended to be boldest in their charges reveal nothing that has not gone on in one degree or another for years.

By the time Lyndon Johnson opted for a big U.S. military role in Vietnam in 1965, we already had 23,300 advisers, helicopter units and others in that country. The first of some 50 U.S. Special Forces camps was set up in the highlands in 1961, with some Americans leading the fighting as well as training the famous "Montagnards."

There is no sign (indeed, much private official assurance to the contrary) that we are going to enlarge our advisory role on the scale reached in Vietnam by 1965. Nor is there any automatic compulsion to introduce big ground force elements even if we do still more than now.

From 1965 through 1968, we flew some 360,000 sorties (often in mission groups) over North Vietnam, using fighter-bombers and a surprisingly few B-52s. The yearly sortie average was 90,000. The bomb tonnage dropped was immense.

We note the conceded stepup in Laos in 1968-70. But given the limiting factors of weather, haze, sporadic seasonal combat, small population, the rugged terrain in Southeast Asia's least-developed nation, the focus on the Ho trail, our air combat in Laos is being badly misrepresented by critics as threatening a huge new war.

17 FEB 1970

The Laos Transcript

President Nixon apparently has refused to authorize publication of a full account of what the Administration told a Senate subcommittee about American involvement in Laos, and Chairman Symington of the subcommittee properly has refused to issue a heavily censored version of the transcript lest the public be deceived. There the matter rests, with no indication the deadlock will be resolved soon.

Meanwhile, whatever the United States is up to in Laos continues apace. Persons who have seen the transcript say it gives a detailed account of American policy and action, including many facts not previously revealed to the Senate. It discloses the cost of U.S. operations and the number of casualties. Senator Gore told the Senate "the evidence is ample that the war in Laos and U.S. participation in the war in Laos have been secretly but greatly accelerated."

The Administration gives as a general excuse for its secrecy the contention that additional discussion on Laos would not be in the public interest, which means, in translation, that if the public knew what the military is doing and plans to do in Laos there would be an uproar. The Administration also is reluctant to provide details because the U.S. has been violating the 1962 Geneva accords and does not want to tell the world about it.

Senator Gore is getting close to the target when he says the U.S. has chosen sides in a civil war in Laos just as it did earlier in Vietnam, and that "what we are doing is getting more deeply involved in Laos while executing a gradual withdrawal from South Vietnam." If this is the case it means the American people are being led blindfolded into another Asian entanglement. What is the point in getting out of Vietnam if the war is merely moved next door to Laos? We hope Mr. Symington and his colleagues can force this matter into the open. The people have a right to know what they are being sucked into so they can call a halt while there is time.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.
JOURNAL

M - 64,231

S - 86,531
FEB 16 1970

Laos: Another Vietnam?

The disturbing question is arising as to whether the Nixon administration is actually escalating military activities in Laos while de-escalating the war in Vietnam.

Senator Foreign Relations Chairman J. William Fulbright maintained some time ago that the government is "hiding the extent of our involvement in Laos . . . its cost in money and lives."

And now Sen. Albert Gore, D-Tenn., is threatening to release secret transcripts showing an "exceedingly disturbing" escalation of U. S. involvement in the civil war in Laos.

And he too contends the administration is "deliberately concealing" escalation.

The transcript of hearings, conducted last year by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's special subcommittee on U. S. commitments overseas, has not been released because of a dispute between senators and the State Department over what should be censored. Gore, a member of the committee but not of the subcommittee, sat in on some of the meetings.

He charges that "we are engaging now in a civil war in Laos and we have chosen sides just as we did earlier in Vietnam."

Meanwhile James McCartney of the Knight Newspapers, has written this brief summary of American activities in Laos:

—The U. S. is providing massive air support to the Royal Laotian Army now combatting the Communists;

—United States bombers from both Vietnam and Thailand are attempting to interdict infiltrators into South Vietnam on the Ho Chi Minh Trail which travels through Laos;

—U. S. fighters are being used for tactical air support to Laotian forces;

—U. S. helicopters are being used to transport Laotian forces from one scene of combat to another;

—U.S. advisers are all but running the Laotian army. Some are Central Intelligence Agency employees attached to the American embassy with innocent sounding titles.

—There are 2150 Americans in Laos, 830 of them in official government positions. The U. S. has lost at least 100 pilots on Laotian missions and about 25 other Americans have been killed in line of duty.

This summation of U. S. engrossment shows a marked similarity to the Vietnam war buildup in the early 1960s.

President Nixon has acknowledged publicly that U. S. planes are interdicting the Ho Chi Minh trail running through Laos but has denied there are any combat troops in Laos.

In the light of the growing questions we think the President now has an obligation to take the American people into his full confidence on the Laotian situation.

STATOTHR

STATOTHR

Nixon and Senators at Odds on Laos Transcript

By RICHARD HALLORAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 11 —

President Nixon was reported today to have refused to authorize the release of anything more than a heavily censored version of a Senate subcommittee's transcript of Administration testimony on the extent of United States involvement in Laos.

Sources in the Administration and in Congress made known the President's decision and said it was in keeping with earlier statements that the United States was bombing the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos but that further public discussion on Laos would not be in the public interest.

The sources said that Senator Stuart W. Symington of Missouri, the subcommittee's chairman, had refused to issue such a watered down transcript because he felt it would mislead the public on what the United States is doing in Laos. Thus, after three months of negotiation between the subcommittee and the Administration, the issue is reported deadlocked with no sign that it will be resolved in the near future.

The sources said the Administration did not want to release the transcript because it would reveal that the United States had broken the Geneva Accords of 1962, which set Laotian neutrality and prohibited outside powers from sending armed forces into Laos.

The Administration was also said to fear that publication would damage a tenuous effort at negotiation with the Soviet Union. The United States has been urging the Soviet Union to use its influence to get North Vietnam to withdraw its 50,000 troops from Laos and return to the 1962 accords.

The Soviet Union, according to sources in the State Depart-

ment, has indicated to the United States that it would neither put pressure on the North Vietnamese nor escalate its support of North Vietnamese actions in Laos so long as the United States did not make a public issue of the conflict there.

Officials who have seen the transcript said that it gives a detailed account of American policy and action in Laos, including many facts not previously revealed to the Senate.

They said the release of the transcript would divulge the cost of American operations there, casualties suffered and the nature of intelligence activity. It might also prove embarrassing, they added, to the

Royal Laotian Government of Premier Souvanna Phouma.

Senator Albert Gore, Democrat of Tennessee, told the Senate this week that he had access to the transcript and that the "evidence is ample that the war in Laos and U.S. participation in the war in Laos has been secretly but greatly escalated."

Senator Gore, a member of the Foreign Relations committee, said that "we are engaging now in a civil war in Laos, and we have chosen sides just as we did earlier in Vietnam." He said that "what we are doing is getting more deeply involved in Laos while executing a gradual withdrawal from South Vietnam."

TOLEDO, OHIO
BLADE

E - 176,688
S - 200,492
FEB 11 1970

And Now Laos

FOR SOME time, there have been disquieting reports from Thailand on the shadowy war raging there in which the United States is becoming increasingly involved. At the moment, our investment there is largely in the form of dollars, equipment, and 48,000 troops supposedly supporting our efforts in Vietnam.

But now comes evidence that a similar seemingly inextricable entanglement may be evolving in Laos where, Senator Fulbright charges, U.S. involvement has been rapidly increasing without public announcement or congressional approval. On top of this, the Pentagon is reportedly preparing to attempt to cut the limits imposed last year by Congress—with White House backing—on the level of military aid that can be extended to both Laos and Thailand.

During secret hearings on Laos last October, it was established that we are, in fact, now providing air support to Laotian troops, using U.S. helicopters and crews to transport and supply Laotian forces, and flying up to 12,500 air sorties monthly. In addition, we have lost some 100 pilots on Laotian missions and another 25 men killed in various combat-related capacities.

The ominous parallel is obvious between what is apparently occurring in Laos and Thailand and the experiences in Vietnam. First we dispatch advisers and technical experts, many of them CIA agents. Then we follow up with military instructors and equipment. Finally, to protect our commitments in men and materiel, we send troops into combat, with the result in Vietnam that we have been bogged down in a disastrous war for nine years that has cost more than 40,000 American lives and over \$100 billion.

President Nixon announced a new Asian policy on Guam last summer designed to put the burden of military engagements in that part of the world on Asian shoulders to prevent our becoming involved in other situations like Vietnam. It is now timely that Congress, if not the President, expose just how far the Pentagon has pushed us into perilous situations in Laos and Thailand, where sectional, tribal, and political enmities threaten to ignite into full-scale civil wars.

What have we gained if we manage to disengage from Vietnam only to find ourselves embroiled in an equally bloody and futile conflict in another corner of Asia?

10 FEB 1970

Bruce Blossat / The truth in Laos



LAST month, Senate Foreign Relations Chairman J. W. Fulbright decided to serve the nation by passing on, via the Congressional Record, a dovish critic's suggestion that the "little war" in Laos might balloon into a "huge, ugly war like Vietnam."

Let's try to get that into sensible perspective.

Laos does have the space for it. North and South Vietnam together outdo it, but its 91,000 square miles make it nearly 50 per cent larger than South Vietnam alone. (Laos is a bit smaller than Oregon.)

Population is something else. By present estimates the combined total of the two Vietnams is 38 million people. Laos has just 2.8 million. More than half of these are hill people scattered all over the tangled Laotian hills. By contrast, South Vietnam's hill tribes, tho they occupy 60 per cent of the nation's land, account for less than 5 per cent of the 18 million population total.

Certainly the total fighting force in Vietnam or adjacent backup areas like Cambodia must range between 1,750,000 and 2,000,000 men — including U.S. forces, South Vietnamese regulars and home units, the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong.

IN northern Laos, where the fighting for that country is centered, it would be a surprise if total forces on both sides much exceed 200,000. North Vietnam's 50,000 are the biggest single unit. Some 10,000 Meo tribesmen on the government side have been holding the strategic Plain of Jars and may now have to yield it under new Red pressure.

Critics who like to talk of America's "secret war" in Laos make much of the presence of

CIA agents, military advisers in civilian dress (most not now members of U.S. armed forces), helicopters and their pilots, planes and their pilots—with the aircraft used for everything from combat support of government armies to dropping relief supplies to refugees (some 600,000 are repeatedly on the move).

Well, the scale of this activity is up some, it is known for sure. But as a phenomenon it goes back to 1954. Most of the time since then, the United States has been training, paying, advising and even directing in combat the non-Red Laotian forces.

By the time Lyndon Johnson opted for a big U.S. military role in Vietnam in 1965, we already had 23,300 advisers, helicopter units and others in that country. The first of some 50 U.S. Special Forces camps were set up in the highlands in 1961, with some Americans leading the fighting as well as training the famous "montagnards."

There is no sign (indeed, much private official assurance to the contrary) that we are going to enlarge our advisory role on the scale reached in Vietnam by 1965. Nor is there any automatic compulsion to introduce big ground force elements even if we do still more than now.

From 1965 thru 1968, we flew some 360,000 sorties (often in mission groups) over North Vietnam, using fighter-bombers and a surprisingly few B-52's. The yearly sortie average was 90,000. The bomb tonnage dropped was immense.

We note the conceded step-up in Laos in 1968-70. But given the limiting factors of weather, haze, sporadic seasonal combat, small population, the rugged terrain in South-east Asia's least developed nation, the focus on the Ho trail, our air combat in Laos is being badly misrepresented by critics as threatening a huge new war.

STATOTHR

MIAMI, FLA.
HERALD

M - 375,469
S - 468,167
FEB 8 1970

U.S. Flies Refugees From Plain of Jars

Miami Herald-Washington Post Wire

WASHINGTON — The State Department said that the United States is providing an airlift for the evacuation of up to 18,000 refugees from the Plain of Jars in Laos at the request of the royal government.

On Thursday 3,000 refugees were flown out, spokesman Carl Bartch said. He would not reveal the type of aircraft used, other than to say they fly under an Agency for International Development contract.

Other sources said that the U.S. will evacuate all of the estimated 18,000 persons on the plain who want to come out, moving them south to Vientiane Province. The distances are short by air, and small planes are adequate. The planes, with American pilots and sometimes with Thai and Chinese serving as crewmen or co-pilots, are used both by AID and the CIA. They are known as Air America and Air Continental.

Some of the refugees are said to be members of families of soldiers in the government forces led by Gen. Vang Pao. Their evacuation, as well as that of other civilians, would make it easier for the general to make a stand against Communist forces.

American officials have suggested that the plain be evacuated without a fight on the premise that superior Communist forces, both North Vietnamese and Lao, could overrun it. The plain was captured last summer by Vang Pao's forces aided by strong American air support.

NEW YORK, N.Y.
TIMESM - 895,505
S - 1,445,507

FEB 5 1970

Laos, Expecting Attack, Will Quit Plaine des Jarres

By HENRY KAMM

Special to The New York Times

LAT SEN, Laos, Feb. 2 —

About 7,000 people live here and perhaps 10,000 more in refugee centers elsewhere on the Plaine des Jarres. But by the end of next week the area will probably be empty except for Government soldiers girding for an expected Communist offensive and for people who, rather will go into hiding and wait for the battle to pass over than face one more uprooting.

The evacuation will mark the nadir in the wars' progressive depopulation of this ruggedly beautiful mountain plateau, a decade ago still one of the principal centers of northern Laos. About 150,000 people are thought to have lived in the plain, the ridges encircling it and the adjoining valleys stretching to Muong Soui in the west and Xiengkhouang in the east.

The people do not yet know that the Laotian Government has decided to evacuate the plain, which it conquered last summer and fears it will lose again soon to the regrouped and refitted invaders from North Vietnam and their allies in the Communist Pathet Lao. [In Vientiane, the Government proposed the neutralization of the plain as a step toward ending the 20-year-old civil war.]

The Government reached its decision to evacuate after overcoming doubts — particularly among Americans, whose influence is great because of the magnitude of United States support — as to whether it might not be better to spare the few thousand who remain the fate of being loaded into planes and put down elsewhere to try to rebuild their lives.

The move will come as no surprise. Firing is already heard at night from the surrounding ridges and it is no longer safe to go out to the pre-Christian stone jars that gave the plain its name, although some are only half an hour's walk from here.

A Fearful Dilemma

For the few who remained rather than go with either the Government or the Pathet Lao during previous retreats and changes of ownership, the expected return of the Communists presents a fearful dilemma: whether to endure Communist

regimentation and American bombing once more or whether to pull up the stakes put down only four months ago and move on again.

The deputy district officer, Khampan Borovongkam, said the Government would resolve the dilemma by evacuating everyone whether they wanted to go or not. But Edgar Buell, an American famous for the devotion with which he cares for the people of this region as chief United States aid official, said he was sure that those who wished to stay would be allowed to.

Chao Saykham, Governor of Xiengkhouang Province, said that to evacuate the people was to live up to their constant appeals for protection from the Communists.

Under the Communists, who occupied the plain from 1964 until last summer, able-bodied men and youths were turned into soldiers and the other men and the women had to do frequent service as porters and in other impressed labor — all under intensive raids by the American and Laotian Air Forces.

Informed sources said that in the entire plain and adjoining regions hardly a house remained standing after the departure of the Communists.

A flight low over the southern part of the plain — until now off limits to the press — confirmed the devastation. The

only houses visible are those in refugee centers like Lat Sen and Khangsi, built after the Communists withdrew and the bombing stopped. Bomb craters pockmark the valleys, knolls and ridges of the plain as densely as the most embattled regions of South Vietnam.

Flights of jets can still be heard whooshing northward toward Communist-held territory. The Laotian Air Force flies no jets.

The people of Lat Sen are enjoying living in houses after having spent most of their days and nights in the woods and in the bunkers dug to escape the bombing when it became steady early last year.

The 6,800 people living in huts made of thatch and odd bits of lumber and tin have wasted no time in turning the expanse of flat sun-parched land on which nothing was standing into a community. The two-room huts, built to a standard pattern, are evenly spaced along broad, clean roads. Individual vegetable patches, from seed provided by the United States, have sprung up behind most houses.

Three school buildings provide classes for 1,100 children aged 6 to 14. There is a hospital, an administration office and the simplest of shops with less than the contents of an ordinary bag of purchases from an American supermarket spread out on a table.

Women squat along the principal street selling rice, which is flown in by the Americans, or vegetables. A pig was the only animal to be seen though the plain was once a cattle-raising region.

Men Are Away Fighting

Lat Sen is a town of few men. There are many women and fewer old men but above all, there are children. The men are away fighting—some for the government, more for the Pathet Lao. It is doubtful that they have ever had much choice for whom they must fight and die.

At school the 30-year-old teacher said he had taught under the Communists too. He said he had instructed the children to fight against the

"American Imperialists" then but was not telling them anything about the Communists now.

The boys were still wearing the Chinese Communist-style blue pants, jackets and caps that they always had.

The teacher said he hoped the Communists would not come back because the children would suffer. For himself, he said he would go to Vientiane if the plain changed hands again.

Many boys were not going to school. A 19-year-old, another of 15 and one of 13 were sitting in a shop that had a few cans of beer and sardines for sale. They were soldiers in the guerrilla army commanded by Maj. Gen. Vang Pao and sponsored by the United States that recaptured the plain last year.

The oldest boy, who said that his name was Khamchan and that he had been a soldier for nine years and was a corporal, related that he commanded a squad of 10, of whom he was the oldest. He has carried an American-made carbine since he was 9, he said, and has used it in battle but he has not killed anyone to his knowledge.

The boys spoke without bravado; boy soldiers are the rule in Laos. Pop Buell, who has lived with the people of this region for more than a decade, said a quarter of the soldiers in General Pao's army were under 16.

Friends Dead in War

All his friends from his early days in Laos have died in combat, the 57-year-old Indiana farmer said, adding: "The best are being killed off in this country and America will never be able to repay them for what they're doing."

Khamchan said that if the Communists tried to come back they would be driven off. He said he saw General Vang Pao three days ago at his command post in the plain, which is at the airfield the French built in their day to serve the town of Xiengkhouang.

It was reliably reported that General Vang Pao had not abandoned hope that the plain could be held, but Premier Souvanna Phouma, King Sisavang Vong and the general's American advisers are prevailing upon him to limit his goals to delaying actions supporting an orderly retreat with minimum casualties.



The New York Times Feb. 5, 1970

Plaine des Jarres, which the Government has decided to evacuate. Light shading indicates the areas of Laos held by Communist forces.

HOUSTON, TEX.
CHRONICLE

E - 279,608
S - 223,807
FEB 1 1970

The U.S. and war in Laos

President Nixon very adroitly has taken the anger out of the Vietnam war issue — at least temporarily — by convincing a large number of Americans that he is getting out of that war just as rapidly as he responsibly can do so.

For the moment, a majority of the American people seem to be going along with him.

But Mr. Nixon doesn't have forever. He has got to show progress in his policy of "winding down" the war and turning over the fighting to the Vietnamese.

And certainly Americans don't want to see him trade off our involvement in Vietnam for a similar involvement in neighboring Laos.

That is what several influential senators fear might happen — Sens. Fulbright, Cooper, Mansfield and Symington, to name a few.

The fighting in Laos in many ways is an extension of the war in Vietnam. It is understandable why U.S. planes bomb the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos—the route by which North Vietnam sends troops and supplies into South Vietnam.

But it is much harder to justify the deep U.S. involvement in the civil war which has been going on for years in Laos itself.

Moreover, it is frightening to realize that this involvement has come about with no apparent authority from Congress to wage such a war.

Sen. Fulbright's Foreign Relations Committee conducted secret hearings on this subject last fall, and most of the testimony has never been revealed. The United States officially de-

nies that it is behind the Laotian government's war against the forces of pro-Communist Prince Souvanna-vong, the Pathet Lao leader. But there is very little doubt about the fact this is so.

Fulbright says the United States supplies all the arms, ammunition and training for an army of 36,000 Meo tribesmen led by Maj. Gen. Vang Pao, a former sergeant in the French colonial army. It is a major military operation costing \$150 to \$160 million a year. The war is backed up by the U.S. Air Force operating out of Thailand. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency is calling many of the shots. U.S. military advisers are all but running the Laotian army. All of this is widely reported unofficially.

It is estimated that some 2,150 Americans are in Laos. At least 100 U.S. pilots have been lost on Laotian missions, which average about 12,500 sorties a month.

And the most incredible fact of all, there apparently is "no written or oral defense commitment to Laos" to back up this semi-secret military involvement.

No wonder the senators are disturbed. This is just how we became involved in the Vietnam war — not so much by a clear determination to do so but rather by a series of gradual escalations, the end of which most Americans did not envision.

We've been down that road once. President Nixon now is trying to reverse the course, and it remains to be seen whether he is succeeding or failing.

God forbid that we do in Laos what we did in Vietnam.

MASS EVACUATION PLANNED IN LAOS

**U.S. Prepares to Act if Foe
Attacks Strategic Plain**

Special to The New York Times

VIENTIANE, Laos, Jan. 31—The United States is planning an evacuation of thousands of civilians in the Plaine des Jarres next week in the expectation of a counteroffensive by Communist forces.

The Defense Ministry spokesman, Col. Thongphanh Knoksy, told newsmen that the Laotian military expected the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces to open a major attack no later than mid-February.

American officials and most diplomatic and military observers from other countries agree that an offensive is likely. They expect the Communist forces to recapture the embattled region in central Laos, which they lost last summer after having controlled it for more than five years. The conquest of the strategic Plains des Jarres was the most notable victory by the Royal Laotian Government in many years and military morale in this battered country still thrives on it.

10,000 Are Involved

The evacuation will involve 10,000 to 15,000 displaced persons who were settled in the Plaine des Jarres after being evacuated early last summer during fighting near Xiengkhouang, in the southeast.

No decision on this major population move has been made by the Laotian Government, but the United States is preparing air transport in the expectation that such a decision is forthcoming.

The first groups to be moved will be a settlement of about 7,000 at Lat Sen, in the southern part of the plain, to a plain around Vientiane, the administrative capital. Since their first uprooting less than a year ago, the displaced persons at Lat Sen have turned a temporary camp into the semblance of a livable place, with a temple under construction and individual vegetable patches.

Now they will once more join the homeless of a war, which, according to the Government, number 600,000, more than a fifth of the total population. The fighting, with rightist and neutralist troops on one side and the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese on the other, broke out in 1963 when a 3-way coalition collapsed.

The expected offensive is causing concern to the Government of Premier Souvanna Phouma and the United States, which sustains the Laotian military effort by heavy bombing of enemy held areas, supplying the Royal Laotian Army with most of its needs and sponsoring the irregular clandestine Army.

The defense of the plan is largely in the hands of the Clandestine Army of Meo mountain tribesmen, commanded by General Van Pao, the most effective—some say the only effective—fighting force on the Government side. It is feared that a battle for the plain, which is in Meo country, may prove excessively costly to General Van Pao's forces, which have borne the brunt of the fighting for years.

Troops Are Outnumbered

Military sources estimate that 16,000 enemy troops, mainly North Vietnamese regulars, are in position in an arc running from the north to the east of the plain against about a third as many Government troops. General Vang Pao commands both the regular troops and his guerrillas in the region.

Another cause for concern is that a rout of the Government forces may so embolden the enemy troops that they would attempt an attack on the nerve center of the Clandestine Army at Lonf Cheng, about 15 miles southwest of the Plaine des Jarres.

Long Cheng is the command post from which the American Central Intelligence Agency runs Gen. Vang Pao's operating base, forward logistics depot and command headquarters.

While few experts believe that the Communist forces could cross the rugged, jungle-covered mountains between the Plaine des Jarres and Long Cheng in sufficient force to hold the Meo centers, there is real concern that a raid in force strong enough to destroy the installations and drive off the Americans and Meo at headquarters is possible.

Some Diplomats Skeptical

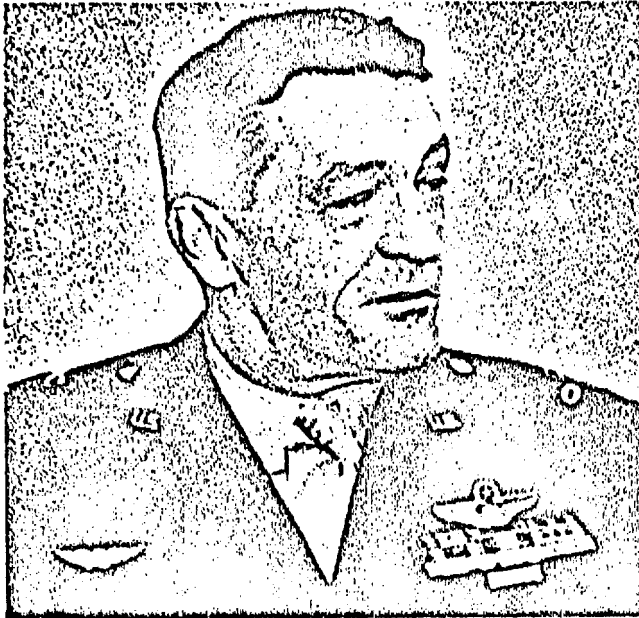
Some diplomats are skeptical of American pessimism and point to the fact that despite the progress of the dry season, during which the Communists normally make their advances, no major attack has yet been launched or seems imminent. They suspect the Americans of seeking to justify a continued high level of bombing and military assistance in Laos.

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Air America: Flying the U.S. into Laos



IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE 1968 presidential campaign, the Democrats made an eleventh-hour bid for the presidency through a White House announcement that all bombing in North Viet-Nam was being stopped and that serious peace negotiations were about to begin. This move was apparently torpedoed within 30 hours by President Thieu of South Viet-Nam who publicly rejected the coming negotiations. Three days later, the Democratic candidate lost to Richard Nixon by a narrow margin.

After the election, it was revealed that a major Nixon fund raiser and supporter had engaged in elaborate machinations in Saigon (including false assurances that Nixon would not enter into such negotiations if elected) to sabotage the Democrats' plan. It was also revealed that, through wire taps, the White House and Humphrey knew of these maneuvers before the election and that a heated debate had gone on among Humphrey strategists as to whether the candidate should exploit the discovery in the last moments of the campaign. Humphrey declined to seize the opportunity, he said, because he was sure that Nixon was unaware of and did not approve of the activities of his supporter in Saigon.

The supporter in question was Madame Anna Chennault, and her covert intervention into the highest affairs of state was by no means an unprecedented act for her and her associates. Madame Chennault's husband, General Claire Chennault, had fought in China with Chiang Kai-shek; after the war he formed a private airline company. Both husband and wife have, through their involvement with the China Lobby and the CIA's complex of private corporations, played a profound role throughout our involvement in Southeast Asia. General Chennault's airline was, for example, employed by the U.S. government in 1954 to fly in support for the French at Dien Bien Phu. It was also a key factor in the new fighting which

had begun in Laos in 1959; moreover, it appears that President Eisenhower was not informed and did not know when his office and authority were being committed in the Laotian conflict, just as Nixon did not know of the intrigue of Mme. Chennault. But that is precisely the point of parapolitics and private war enterprise.

In its evasion of Congressional and even Executive controls over military commitments in Laos and elsewhere, the CIA has long relied on the services of General Chennault's "private" paramilitary arm, Civil Air Transport or (as it is now known) Air America, Inc.

[HOW AIR AMERICA WAGES WAR]

AIR AMERICA'S FLEETS OF TRANSPORT planes are readily seen in the airports of Laos, South Viet-Nam, Thailand and Taiwan. The company is based in Taiwan, where a subsidiary firm, Air Asia, with some 8000 employees, runs one of the world's largest aircraft maintenance and repair facilities. While not all of Air America's operations are paramilitary or even covert, in Viet-Nam and even more in Laos, it is the chief airline serving the CIA in its clandestine war activities.

Until recently the largest of these operations was the supply of the fortified hilltop positions of the 45,000 Meo tribesmen fighting against the Pathet Lao behind their lines in northeast Laos. Most of these Meo outposts have airstrips that will accommodate special Short Take-off And Landing aircraft, but because of the danger of enemy fire the American and Nationalist Chinese crews have usually relied on parachute drops of guns, mortars, ammunition, rice, even live chickens and pigs. Air America's planes also serve to transport the Meos' main cash crop, opium.

The Meo units, originally organized and trained by the French, have provided a good indigenous army for the Americans in Laos. Together with their CIA and U.S. Special Forces "advisors," the Meos have long been used to harass Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese supply lines. More recently they have engaged in conventional battles in which they have been transported by Air America's planes and helicopters (New York Times, October 29, 1969). The Meos also defended, until its capture in 1968, the key U.S. radar installation at Pathi near the North Vietnamese border; the station had been used in the bombing of North Viet-Nam.

Further south in Laos, Air America flies out of the CIA operations headquarters at Pakse, from which it reportedly supplies an isolated U.S. Army camp at Attapu in the south-east, as well as the U.S. and South Vietnamese Special Forces operations in the same region (San Francisco Chronicle, October 15, 1969). Originally the chief purpose of these activities was to observe and harass the Ho Chi Minh trail, but recently the fighting in the Laotian panhandle, as elsewhere in the country, has expanded into a general air and ground war. Air America planes are reported to be flying arms, supplies and reinforcements in this larger campaign as well (New York Times, September 18, 1969).

by Peter Dale Scott

Ed. 1.04 James, Robert Camp
P-Dammen, Arthur J
Photograph of General Claire Chennault by Black Star
Sec. 4.01.2 Conflict in Laos
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E - 461,357

JAN 31 1970

By John S. Knight

U.S. role in Laos disturbing

Some nine years ago — Jan. 8, 1961, to be precise — I was saying something like this:

"What should concern us today is the possibility of U.S. military intervention in Laos, a mountainous little Buddhist country about the size of Idaho which lies between Thailand and Burma to the west and the two Vietnams on the east."



Knight

"Since 1954 (mark the date), the United States has given

\$300,000,000 to sustain Laotian Independence and keep Laos out of the Communist orbit.

"The forces which hope to dominate Laos comprise the Pathet Lao, a Communist guerilla movement, and the Communists of North Vietnam. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization has charged that troops from North Vietnam have infiltrated Laos.

"Great Britain and France, both signatories to the SEATO pact, have shown no interest in rushing to the defense of Laos. If anything is done the United States will be expected to act.

"Our military involvement there would be, as President-elect Kennedy stated in the campaign, 'The wrong war at the wrong place and at the wrong time' — unsound militarily, unnecessary to our security and unsupported by our allies.

"No Russian soldiers died in Korea and none will die in Laos if we are silly enough to get caught in a conflict where there is no chance of winning decisively and achieving permanent peace in that region."

NEARLY A DECADE has elapsed since that warning was first printed, a period in which Vietnam and not Laos was to provide the setting for a bloody war in which more than 40,000 Americans have died.

Yet we have never been idle in Laos despite reassurances from Sec. of State William P. Rogers that "we are not going to fight any major wars on the mainland of Asia . . . We are not going to send American troops there."

As revealed by James McCartney of the Knight newspapers, here is a brief summary of American activities in Laos:

- The U.S. is providing massive air support to the royal Laotian army now combating the Communists.

- United States bombers from both Vietnam and Thailand are attempting to interdict infiltrators into South Vietnam on the Ho Chi Minh Trail which travels through Laos.

- U.S. fighters are being used for tactical air support to Laotian forces.

- U.S. helicopters are being used to transport Laotian forces from one scene of combat to another.

- U.S. advisers are all but running the Laotian army. Some are Central Intelligence Agency employees attached to the American Embassy with innocent sounding titles.

- There are 2,150 Americans in Laos, 830 of them in official government positions. The U.S. has lost at least 100 pilots on Laotian missions and about 25 other Americans have been killed in line of duty.

THIS SUMMATION of U.S. engrossment shows a marked similarity to the Vietnam War buildup in 1965 and 1966.

So the disturbing question arises as to whether the Nixon administration is actually escalating military activities in Laos while de-escalating the war in Vietnam.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman J. William Fulbright maintains the government is "hiding the extent of our involvement in Laos . . . its cost in money and lives."

Senators Fulbright, Mansfield and Symington are bristling over the State Department's withholding of secret evidence on Laos which was given to the committee in four days of testimony last October.

These senators are properly indignant over a vastly enlarged American participation in Laos without public announcement or Senate approval.

Having been burned once in

Vietnam campaign promises of 1964, they are no longer in a trusting mood and in fact suspect the worst.

WHILE THE NATION is disposed to be patient with the Nixon administration in its efforts to disengage from Vietnam, be warned that Laos contains the same ingredients of future trouble.

It was a somnolent Senate, remember, that condoned our growing entrapment in Vietnam in the days when spirited debate might have prevented the tragic consequences of a full scale war.

In the light of correspondent McCartney's revelations, we think the President now has an obligation to take the American people into his full confidence on the Laotian situation.

And we applaud the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for demanding that the truth be told as it is without further fraud or deception.

PRESIDENT NIXON was right in vetoing the \$19.7 billion health and education money bill, a measure that would have compelled him to spend \$1.2 billion more than he had requested of Congress.

BACK IN Jack Kennedy's day, the President hit the ceiling when U.S. Steel raised prices in violation of what JFK thought was a gentleman's agreement to hold the line.

Now Big Steel has done it again. No breach of faith, understand, but prices are going up "along with the industry."

When steel goes up, so do the costs of thousands of other manufactured items in everyday use. Inflationary? Of course.

It must be a sign of the times that nary a protest has been heard.

U.S. renews bombing of North Vietnamese

Daily World Foreign Department

Waves of U.S. bombers attacked the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on Wednesday, the DRV charged, and three U.S. planes were shot down over Ha Tinh and Quang Binh provinces.

Colonel Ha Van Lau, deputy DRV negotiator, just before entering Thursday's session of the Paris peace talks, said he would deliver a stiff protest to the U.S. side "against this very serious act of war."

In a Thursday broadcast, the DRV's Radio Hanoi said: "The Americans blatantly sent numerous aircraft to violate the air space of the DRV, dropping bombs and machine-gunning populated areas west of Ha Tinh and Quang Binh provinces."

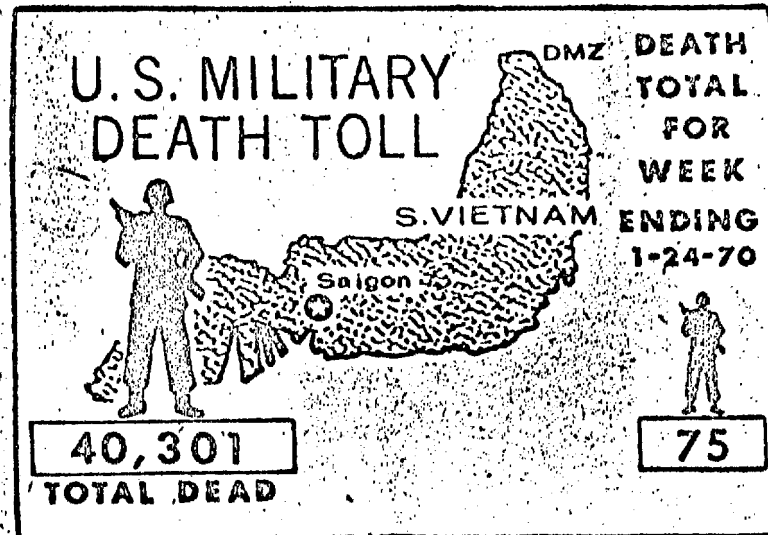
DRV anti-aircraft fire knocked down three planes and damaged others, Radio Hanoi reported.

U.S. sources in the Saigon military command reported that on Wednesday, MIG jet fighters shot down a U.S. rescue helicopter which was trying to pick up two American pilots "near the Laos-North Vietnamese border." The U.S. airmen's plane, an F-105 Thunderchief based in Thailand, earlier had been shot down by what the U.S. command called "Communist gunfire."

In Saigon, meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy and the Saigon government disclaimed any involvement in the U.S. military command's attempt to infiltrate the Saigon press corps with military intelligence agents.

The two agents, Howard Hethcox and William T. Tucker, posed as newsmen and were issued press cards by the U.S. command. The agents were identified by the Defense Department as members of the army's Criminal Investigation Division (CID).

The CID generally handles actual criminal cases (theft, murder, etc.) involving army personnel. But the two agents' mission was to uncover American newsmen's sources of information in South Vietnam. This would appear to place the mission within the province of the army Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC) or



the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

"This is an amazing thing for me to learn about," a Saigon regime spokesman insisted, adding he knew nothing about any such case. "We have mutual understanding and cooperation with the U.S. Command," he said.

Later, the U.S. command in Saigon announced it had revoked the press credentials of two Saigon government agents who similarly had tried to infiltrate the corps of U.S. and foreign newsmen, on the same mission as their U.S. counterparts. These events follow on the heels of sweeping repression unleashed by the Thieu-Ky clique against Saigon opposition forces.

CIA front in Cambodia

This week, motions filed by defense lawyers before the Military Court of Review in Washington revealed that the CIA and U.S. "Special Forces" used the so-called "Free Cambodia" (Khmer Serei) movement for secret operations in Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam. The sworn testimony was given at the 1968 trial of Green Beret Captain John J.

McCarthy, Jr.

McCarthy was convicted at the 1968 court-martial of killing a Cambodian agent who was a member of the "Khmer Serei" and also a member of Detachment B-57, Fifth Special Forces Group, based in Nhatrang, South Vietnam.

The McCarthy case recalled the arrest last year of eight "Green Beret" officers, including the commander of the Fifth Special Forces Group, on charges of having murdered one of their South Vietnamese agents.

Trial records disclose that when Capt. McCarthy was asked what the "Khmer Serei" was, he replied that it "is an organization which plans the political overthrow of the Cambodian government." McCarthy said that a U.S. government intelligence agency, whose name he did not reveal, was engaged in the same type of operations in Cambodia as the Special Forces.

So far as is known, the Daily World was the first U.S. newspaper to charge, nearly a year ago, that the "Khmer Serei" was a front for the CIA.

U.S. rain of bombs fails to crush Laos

By HUGO HILL

VIENTIANE, Laos (LNS)—The U.S. government is spending \$300 million a year to crush the Laos revolution and is having even less success than in neighboring Vietnam.

After seven years of fitful fighting, the Pathet Lao revolutionaries control about three-fourths of the country and have cut all the roads in the government-controlled quarter. The Royal Laos Government, a servant of the U.S., can lay claim only to the capital city of Vientiane and about half a dozen other towns and their environs. The rest of the country is either uninhabited or liberated.

This basic situation remains unaltered despite the U.S. offensive in the Plain of Jars last summer.

In June, 1969, the Pathet Lao pulled a surprise by launching an offensive during the rainy season, when their logistics are impaired. Pushing out from their Plain of Jars base, the revolutionary forces captured Muong Soui, a government-run town on the western edge of the Plain, cut the road between Vientiane and Luang Prabang, and threatened the CIA's military headquarters at Long Cheng.

The U.S. responded with a massive, secrecy-shrouded counter-offensive. For the first time in the Laos war, the pretext of interdicting the "Ho Chi Minh trail" was discarded and U.S. Phantom jets ran a saturation bombing campaign against all communities in the Plain of Jars.

But now the rainy season is over, and the Pathet Lao's logistics are simplified. Everyone realizes that if the Pathet Lao call for a showdown in the Plain of Jars, the reactionaries will be powerless to stop them.

American bombing

The American answer to the dilemma of Laos is more of the same. Since last summer's offensive, bombing has continued at the almost incredible level of 20,000 sorties per month. Liberated Laos is now subject to the same intensity of bombing

as was North Vietnam two years ago.

Refugees report people live in caves and tunnels and venture out to work their fields only at night. Markets in the liberated towns open in the pre-dawn hours and close at sunrise, so as not to provide easy targets. Life in the countryside has become so difficult that refugees may now constitute one-fourth of the population.

American bombing is not limited to the Plain of Jars but covers most of liberated Laos, including Sam Neua, the Pathet Lao capital, and Phong Saly. Both those provinces had been granted to the Pathet Lao under the Geneva Agreements.

Secret army

Until recently, the U.S. was caught in a bad bind here. The Pathet Lao, as part of the South Pathet Lao, as part of the Southeast Asian revolutionary movement, had to be crushed. Intensive bombing could not do the job. Only infantry can occupy territory.

But given home-front resistance to the invasion of Vietnam, it has not been feasible to send U.S. Marines to Laos whose own "Royal Army" is the only one in Asia that makes the Saigon troops look good by comparison. It could not last a day in the field against the Pathet Lao.

So the CIA fell back on the old imperialist principle of divide-and-rule and began courting the Meos, a large mountain tribe with deep historical resentment against the lowland Lao. Promising the Meos future autonomy (the same approach used earlier with the Montagnards in Vietnam), the CIA organized 15,000 Meo men into a full-time army and enlisted their families in a

This army—under the leadership of the now notorious General Vang Pao—is a clandestine, unofficial body. It is trained, equipped and financed by the CIA and is independent of the Royal Laos Government.

Last summer when Vang Pao's troops occupied the Plain of Jars something the Royal Army had been unable to do in six years.

The secret army is only one of the three prongs used by the American strategists. The others are U.S. bombs and Thai mercenaries. (Unofficial estimates place the number of Thai artillerymen here at 5,000).

Tonkin Bay: Was There a Conspiracy?

Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair—Illusion and Reality by Joseph C. Goulden.

A James B. Adler Inc. Book, published in association with Rand McNally, 283 pp., \$6.95

Peter Dale Scott

Seaman Patrick N. Park, on the night of August 4, 1964, was directing the gun-control radar of the *USS Maddox*. For three hours he had heard torpedo reports from the ship's sonarman, and he had seen, two or three times, the flash of guns from a nearby destroyer, the *Turner Joy*, in the rainy darkness. But his radar could find no targets, "only the occasional roll of a wave as it breaks into a whitecap." At last, just before midnight, a target: "a damned big one, right on us... about 1,500 yards off the side, a nice fat blip." He was ordered to open fire; luckily, however, not all seamen blindly follow orders.

Just before I pushed the trigger I suddenly realized, That's the *Turner Joy*.... There was a lot of yelling of "Goddamn" back and forth, with the bridge telling me to "fire before we lose contact," and me yelling right back at them.... I finally told them, "I'm not opening fire until I know where the *Turner Joy* is." The bridge got on the phone and said, "Turn on your lights, *Turner Joy*." Sure enough, there she was, right in the cross hairs... 1,500 yards away. If I had fired, it would have blown it clean out of the water. In fact, I could have been shot for not squeezing the trigger. Then people started asking, "What are we shooting at...?" We all began calming down. The whole thing seemed to end then.

Goulden's fascinating book, which has gathered much new information about the Tonkin Gulf incidents, sees the experience of Patrick Park as, with one exception, a microcosm of the entire Tonkin affair—

illustrating the confusion between illusion and reality and the inclination of man to act upon facts as he anticipates they *should be*, rather than what rational examination shows them *to be*. The exception is that Park refused to squeeze the firing key, while Washington acted on the basis of assumption, not fact—hastily, precipitously, perhaps

sarily—firing at an unseen enemy lurking behind the blackness of misinformation.

Not all will accept the analogy between Washington and a confused young seaman, but this hardly lessens the importance of Goulden's patient researches. The author of a book on AT&T and a former reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Goulden has made good use of his years of experience in Washington. He has not really written a "thesis" book; his method is to stick closely to official documents (above all the neglected Fulbright Committee Hearing of 1968) and first-hand interviews with witnesses the Committee failed to call, including Seaman Park. At times he can be faulted for believing so much what was told him in the Pentagon. Even so, the

result is devastating. It is now even more clear that the Tonkin Gulf Resolution (in his words) "contains the fatal taint of deception." The Administration had withheld much vital information in formulating the simple story of "unprovoked attack" by which that resolution was pushed through Congress.

The *Maddox*, according to McNamara in 1964, was on a "routine patrol in international waters." In fact it was on an electronics intelligence (ELINT) or spy mission for the National Security Agency and CIA. One of its many intelligence requirements orders was "to stimulate Chicom-North Vietnamese electronic reaction," i.e., to provoke the North Vietnamese into turning on their defensive radars so that the frequencies could be measured. To this end, between August 1 and 4, the *Maddox* repeatedly simulated attacks by moving toward the shore with its gun control radar mechanism turned on, as if it were preparing to shoot at targets. In so doing, it violated the twelve-mile limit which Pentagon officials thought North Vietnam claimed for her territorial waters.² Far from being "routine," this was only the third such patrol in the Tonkin Gulf in thirty-two months; and the North Vietnamese had to assess it in the context of a recent US build-up and South Vietnamese threats to carry the war north.

On July 31, just before the patrol, the South Vietnamese had for the first

heard North Vietnamese orders to position a defensive ring of PT boats around Hon Me after the first South Vietnamese attack on the North Vietnamese islands, as well as speculations about the possible link between the *Maddox* and the raids.

Near Hon Me on the morning of August 2 the NSA technicians intercepted orders for PT boats to attack the *Maddox*. Captain Herrick aboard the *Maddox* cabled to his superiors in Honolulu that "continuance of patrol presents an unacceptable risk," but was ordered to resume his itinerary. The *Maddox* returned to a point eleven miles from Hon Me island, and then heard a North Vietnamese order for its attack. This was the prelude for the first incident of August 2—it is clear both that a North Vietnamese attack was ordered and

According to *The New York Times* (Aug. 11, 1964, p. 15) the *Ticonderoga's* Task Force Commander Rear Admiral Robert B. Moore "indicated that the destroyer might have been two or three miles inside the 12-mile limit set by Hanoi for international waters."

McNamara told the Committee that the *Maddox* could simulate an attack on the coast by turning on special transmitters, but the Pentagon later said the ship carried passive equipment and could only listen.

continued

WASHINGTON
DATA ROOM

27 JAN 1970

750 sorties in one day

CIA 'air force' fighting in Laos

STATOTHR

By JAMES FOSTER
Scripps-Howard Staff Writer

UDORN, Thailand, Jan. 27 — The United States is throwing more and more of its own air power and support for native ground forces into the struggle against Communist take-over of Laos.

U.S. air missions into Laos are said to be up 100 per cent over a year ago. Some days as many as 750 bombing sorties are flown from seven strategically located bases in Thailand.

Laotian government troops can't stand up against the estimated 40,000 North Vietnamese and 30,000 Pathet Lao Communist rebels who already control the eastern half of the country, adjacent to North Vietnam.

If the remaining half is to be saved — the

part that stands as a buffer along Thailand's border — it is apparent the United States will have to do it.

For similar reasons the seven operating air bases in Thailand are U.S.-built, -financed and run, but title was turned over to the Royal Thai Air Force. In this manner the United States becomes a guest and can't be accused of owning any bases where it isn't supposed to.

Several of these bases are within a stone's throw of the Thai-Laotian border. Air controllers at Nakhon Phanom, in the northeast, for instance, watch the sun rise over Laotian mountains 13 miles away. The border is only 10 miles away.

And Udorn, south of the border, is 10 minutes by jet from the Plain of Jars, main battle-

ground in the see-saw fight for control of the northern sector of Laos.

Udorn is said to be the busiest field in Thailand with 6,500 U.S. Air Force personnel (there are 38,000 in all of Thailand) and an undisclosed number of civilians working for Air America.

Air America is the largest of two air forces operated by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The second is Continental Air Service.

Other U.S. civilians hired by the CIA give on-the-job training to guerrillas, operate a communications network along the border, carry out intelligence missions and run other clandestine errands.

The CIA also hires Thai guerrillas and supports a 40,000-man army of Lao hill tribesmen.

By using civilians and the Air Force the U.S. hedges its claim of having no "combat troops" inside Laos.

While ground operations are relatively inexpensive and inconspicuous, Air America and Continental Air Service are not. They seem to be everywhere. But their cost, which might indicate the scope of their operations, is hidden in the CIA budget which is immune to public scrutiny.

WALTER SCOTT'S Personality Parade

STATOTHR

Q. Was President Richard Nixon telling the nation the truth when he announced at a press conference that we have no combat troops fighting the war in Laos?
—P.T.Y., Durham, N.C.

A. Technically he was telling the truth. We have no U.S. ground forces fighting in Laos. But American airmen have been there for years. The truth is that the U.S., through the CIA, is paying a clandestine army of an estimated 40,000 Meo Hill tribesmen to fight the North Vietnamese intruders and the Pathet Lao rebels. In addition to CIA personnel, we have more than 70 assistant military attachés at the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane who are advising the Laotian army.

23 JAN 1970

Hill Session Brought Out U.S. Troop Activity in Laos

There is "no written or oral defense commitment to Laos" to back up the largely secret U.S. involvement in two kinds of wars in that nation, the Senate was told in closed session last month.

A heavily censored transcript of Senate debate on Dec. 15 about American activities in Laos was made public yesterday. The Senate went into executive session to discuss an amendment to prevent the use of defense funds to introduce U.S. ground troops into Laos or Thailand.

The transcript showed considerable dispute about U.S. activities in Laos and the implications of the limiting amendment, sponsored by Sen. John Sherman Cooper (R-Ky.) and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.). The amendment was passed afterward by a 72-to-17 roll call vote.

The record confirms what the United States officially never has admitted: that the United States is heavily engaged in the war over Laos itself, as well as being engaged—which is officially ad-

mitted—in "interdiction" of the Laotian segments of the Ho Chi Minh trails used by North Vietnam to infiltrate the South.

Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) said in the debate that "the present (U.S.) activities in the nature of aerial sorties over Laos are in violation of the (Geneva) accord" of 1962 on Laotian neutrality. That exchange was partly deleted by administration censors, along with many others.

The fragmentary transcript shows Sen. Allen J. Ellender (D-La.) and Sen. John C. Stennis (D-Miss.) reporting that the pending defense bill included \$94 million to support the Royal Laotian Army. But that is only a portion of the cost involved, critics charge. Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, previously said the United States was supplying, arming, training and supporting an anti-Communist guerrilla army of 36,000 men in Laos.

The transcript shows Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.) asking: "Are the local forces (in

Laos) referred to, American or indigenous forces?"

Mansfield: "They are indigenous forces, both Thai and Laotian."

It was unclear if Mansfield was referring to Thai forces from Thailand, or Thais indigenous to Laos. Thailand insists it has no troops fighting in Laos. However, there have been frequent reports of some Thai military personnel in Laos.

At one point, the record shows, Mansfield said: "If we did not subsidize the Laotians, they would not last for a fortnight" against pro-Communist troops.

The unofficial American position is that the United States gave military support to the anti-Communist forces in Laos only after the Communists first violated the Geneva accords. In the debate, Fulbright said there is no right in international law "that if someone else violates the laws, you are also entitled to do it."

The United States repeatedly has said it has "no ground combat troops" in Laos.

In the Senate, a question about the number and function of U.S. military personnel in Laos produced this answer in the censored record:

"There are (deleted) U.S. military personnel stationed in Laos. These are either part of or attached to the attache staff. (deleted)."

S196

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

January 20, 1970

PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS OF
THE PENTAGON

Mr. FULBRIGHT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the Record at this point a news article from the January 3 Albuquerque Journal reporting the appearance in Albuquerque of a team of officers from the North American Air Defense Command, whose mission, apparently, was to drum up public support for a bigger and more costly defense system. This propagandizing for public support of higher military spending typifies the problem of the Defense Department's public relations program, about which I made a series of speeches in the Senate last December. According to the news story, one of the officers in the team, Army Maj. Kenneth J. Cook, said:

Although today's defense forces cannot stop either an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) attack or a missile attack from a submarine force, the United States is beginning to concentrate on a new system which would be effective against these attacks.

Called Safeguard, the plan would use innovations in radar and both long- and short-range interceptor missiles.

The major's presentation came shortly after his Air Force team colleague said:

In the event of a missile attack (from the Soviet Union), you could expect 15 to 20 minutes warning time . . . But our systems only warn the people. We can tell them when they're coming, but we can't stop them.

Presentations of the type of material to the public in this edge-of-war context appear to me to take on a sophisticated form of lobbying when we realize that additions to the already controversial Safeguard system are being contemplated for debate during the upcoming congressional session.

In fact this whole team project appears to follow the line of the Starbird memorandum for promoting the Safeguard system, which I had thought the Secretary of Defense had done away with last year.

The floor manager of the Defense appropriations bill, the senior Senator from Louisiana, assured me that the Appropriations Committee will take a good hard look at the Pentagon's public affairs program this year. I hope that Congress will take effective steps this session to bring the Pentagon's public relations apparatus under control.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

[From the Albuquerque Journal, Jan. 3, 1970]
U.S. DEFENSE ONLY WARNS, COLONEL SAYS
(By Mike Padget)

The United States does not have the defensive capability to stop a missile attack from the Soviet Union, a member of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) briefing team told newsmen Friday.

The three-member team, emphasizing they were speaking in behalf of NORAD's commander in chief, made their presentation at the Albuquerque Press Club in the Downtowner.

"In event of a missile attack, you could expect 15 to 20 minutes warning time," said Air Force Lt. Col. William H. Copp, who heads

the team. "But our systems only warn the people. We can tell when they're coming, but we can't stop them."

Another team member, Army Maj. Kenneth J. Cook, said although today's defense forces cannot stop either an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) attack or a missile attack from a submarine force, the United States is beginning to concentrate on a new system which would be effective against these attacks.

Called Safeguard, the plan would use innovations in radar and both long- and short-range interceptor missiles.

The major said the basic functions of the Safeguard system would be "to protect our retaliatory forces, protect against a possible attack in the future from Communist China and protect against an accidental attack."

Cook said NORAD officials believe if the Soviet Union declares war on the United States "they would commence activity with a surprise attack and follow quickly with manned bombers."

In the opening phase of the three-part presentation, a captain in the Canadian Armed Forces, Donald Kidd, described the Russian bomber system and missile program.

"The bomber is still an effective and efficient weapon," he said, adding the Soviet Union has bombers capable of flying non-stop missions to any point in the United States.

He said the Soviet Union's missile system is particularly advanced. More than 1700 ICBMs are included in the program—and they have a range of "in excess of 6500 miles."

The Soviet submarine force is growing rapidly with about eight new Polaris-type submarines being produced annually, he said.

Kidd also said Red China is expected to have "mid-range missiles" by the end of the year and "moderate-range" missiles by the mid-1970s.

Copp said the functions of NORAD are to "detect, identify and, if necessary, destroy" any flying object which poses a threat to the safety of the population on the North American continent.

He said although the defense system would be moderately effective against a manned bomber attack, the method still poses a "major threat."

"They (bombers) could mine our harbors, hit multiple targets and use both chemical and germicide warfare," he said.

HOW HANOI SEES NIXON

Mr. FULBRIGHT. Mr. President, the January 29 issue of the New York Review of Books contains an interesting article by Richard J. Barnet, entitled "How Hanoi Sees Nixon," based on the author's conversations last November with North Vietnamese and NLF officials in Hanoi. After his return he reported on his conversations to U.S. officials concerned with Vietnam policy. He summarized the difference in viewpoints by writing that, "After my talks with the strategists on both sides it became clear to me that Hanoi and Washington are not fighting the same war."

We know all too little about the thinking of the other side and Mr. Barnet's report is a significant contribution to better informed public discussion of the prospects for success of the administration's policy.

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the Record at this point.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

How HANOI SEES NIXON
(By Richard J. Barnet)

Five days after President Nixon's November 3 speech I arrived in Hanoi for a series of discussions on the war, including a long interview with Premier Pham Van Dong. Several days after my return I met with the main Vietnam advisors of the US Government, including Henry Kissinger. After my talks with the strategists on both sides it became clear to me that Hanoi and Washington are not fighting the same war.

The analysis of the enemy is completely different in the two capitals. The North Vietnamese do not judge how well or how badly they are doing by counting bodies or comparing this month's statistics with those of last month. They look at trends on the battlefield and always concentrate on their long-term political consequences. They note that from 1965 to the present the US Government tried to win a military victory with 500,000 troops, that it failed, and that it had to move its forces into defensive positions and to begin withdrawing them. The leaders of the Nixon Administration are optimistic because after the continual aerial pounding of Viet Cong positions it is now possible to drive safely in parts of South Vietnam where formerly it was risky.

The North Vietnamese do not use travel but the ability to govern as a criterion of political success. They admit that they have taken serious losses in the South. In a recent captured document distributed by the State Department they allude to the higher desertion rate by conceding that "a number of Party members have gone so far as to surrender to the enemy and betray the nation." In North Vietnam itself there is evidence of hardship brought by the bombing, including shortages of power, fuel, and, above all, housing.

Nevertheless, I was struck by the mood of confidence in the North Vietnamese capital. The leader of the NLF in Hanoi told me, "We are gaining in the cities." It is now possible, they say, to obtain NLF literature anywhere in Saigon. More and more members of the middle class are making accommodations with the NLF. Officials of the Front also told me that they have a large military headquarters in Saigon itself. It is true that, under sustained B-52 attacks, the NLF had to withdraw from areas long under its control. But this development hardly bears out the optimistic prediction of a "secure" Vietnam by 1972 now being made in Washington by Sir Robert Thompson and other pacification experts. Even the most optimistic reports do not claim that the Thieu regime is now able to establish a legitimate order in former Viet Cong areas or to attract the loyalty of the people. The North Vietnamese are convinced that a pacification program which depends upon sustained American bombing is a strategy for prolonging the war rather than ending it. They know that the bombing further alienates the people from the Americans and they believe that when enough US troops withdraw, "the puppet government and army will collapse."

The political and military analysis of U.S. strategy I heard in Hanoi was in almost every case subsequently confirmed by some of the highest officials of our government. The Vietnamese are avid readers of U.S. News and World Report and The New York Times. They make it their business to know the current Washington analysis of the war and they try to understand the popular mood. Washington's political intelligence on North Vietnam, on the other hand, seemed of a much lower order. While State Department and CIA analysts are handicapped by the lack of published sources and personal contacts in Hanoi, U.S. officials compound their problem by failing to read carefully what the North Vietnamese do publish. What the Vietnamese

17 JAN 1970

STATOTHR

STATOTHR

RICE RUNS—AND ARMS

Lao Units in Field Supplied
By CIA-Chartered Planes

By TAMMY ARBUCKLE

Special to The Star

VIENTIANE — The United States is almost totally responsible for the logistics of Lao government forces in the current war against North Vietnamese and Communist Pathet Lao forces in Laos, well-informed sources here admit.

Top Lao officials no longer bother to deny the fact. "We could not do without American logistic support. We need it to survive against the Communists," says one Laotian.

This American logistics operation is carried out entirely by American civilians and by U.S. military men in civilian-cover roles. This is because Washington shies away from admitting its military involvement in Laos for political reasons.

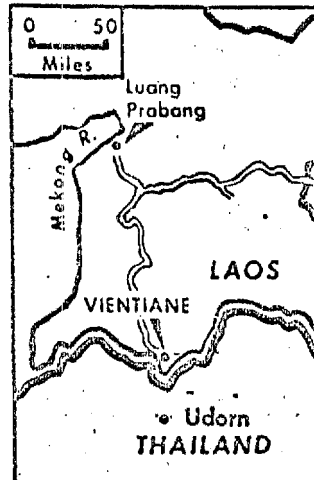
Both the men and aircraft concerned in these operations, therefore, are claimed by U.S. officials to be — and often are — part of the yearly \$52 million aid program in Laos.

The operations include the movement of troops, ammunition and food to battle areas in the mountains, and evacuation of government wounded. The missions are often under fire and are carried out by two American companies — "Air America" and "Continental Airlines."

Questioned by reporters about these companies, U.S. Embassy officials give the stock reply that the firms are private companies under charter to the American Agency for International Development. According to the embassy officials, the two companies are engaged in flying rice to 800,000 refugees made up mostly of tribespeople fleeing North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao troops.

The beauty of this reply is that Air America, besides its military activities, does fly many thousands of tons of rice and other foodstuffs to the refugees.

To bolster this image, corre-



spondents are allowed to go on these rice-drop flights.

The aircraft, usually a C47 transport, is loaded with 5 tons of rice by Filipino, Thai and Lao cargo handlers at Vientiane's Wattay Airport. Anywhere from 20 to 50 minutes after takeoff, the plane drops into a mountain bowl or circles over a ridge partially hidden by clouds.

While the craft circles, two Americans in the cockpit scan the drop zone for recognition signals showing the area is in friendly hands. Then a bell buzzes, signalling the drop is on. "Kickers" (cargo handlers) — usually Thais — trundle the rice sacks stacked on plywood pallets down a roller coaster of metal strips and wheels to the fuselage door. Then the sacks are sent cascading down to the drop zone. The plane flies 7 times round under the mountain peaks, then heads back to Vientiane for another load.

Base in Thailand

Correspondents, however, are not officially permitted on the arms flights. These flights originate from what pilots refer to as "Tango" — America's Udon airbase in north-east Thailand, 32 miles from the Lao border.

Ammunition and other supplies are trucked from Bang-

kok to Udon. There they are stored in concrete warehouses encircled by a series of wire fences with manned sentry towers and floodlights. Storage areas are spaced wide apart to prevent attacks by Thai Communist terrorists.

At Udon, ammunition is loaded aboard C123 transports. These transports, colored silver, have no identification marks apart from a "Stars & Stripes" on the tail.

Informed sources say the planes are chartered to the Central Intelligence Agency for these particular flights.

Each plane's load and destination is decided by American "Requirements Office" personnel. The Requirements Office, though it is situated in the American aid compound in Vientiane comes under CIA and Pentagon auspices, Americans say.

Its location is the aid compound is part of the cover story.

There are presently 87 requirements officers in Laos. They are ex-military personnel hired by the CIA. Some of them control warehouses bulging with arms and other military equipment upcountry. The warehouses are marked as aid warehouses.

Dropping or landing zones for both AID and arms cargoes are known by Air America pilots as "sites." These sites are assigned numbers from 1 up to as high as 200; names are seldom used. Other sites have girl's names such as "Mary," or names derived from code such as "Hotel India."

The sites are divided into "Lima," sites where larger aircraft can land, and STOL sites (short landing and take-off) for Air America's single engined Helio Couriers and Pilatus Porters.

Some sites can only take a helicopter.

Over 200 Pilots Used

Cargoes are taken by transports to Lima sites, then distributed by light aircraft and

Air America employs 133 American pilots, Continental employs 73.

The two companies have approximately 70 aircraft and 20 helicopters which carry out both AID and arms flights. Air America pilots receive base pay of around \$20,000 per year for 70 flying hours, a month, hours over 70 are overtime at higher pay rates.

The pilots are worth every dollar. Laos terrain and weather mean dangerous flying conditions. Craggy mountains are covered by layers of thick fog, smoke from tribesmen burning off forest for opium fields, or are hidden by monsoon rains.

Aboard a green, unmarked Air America H34 "Sikorsky" helicopter with an American crew, this correspondent sat on boxes of M36 hand grenades with two teen-aged Lao troopers who clutched their carbines fearfully as we circled looking vainly in a thick mountain fog for our landing zone north of the royal capital, Luang Prabang.

Finally we skimmed between two barely seen peaks to land on a site 100 yards square encircled by a shallow trench with bunkers. Government troopers unloaded the grenades, and within minutes, the chopper was back in the air. The crew was in a hurry because Communist troops were on surrounding ridges and the tiny garrison feared a mortar attack on the helicopter.

Americans Nervous

Sitting later in a Lao command post under Communist fire, this reporter heard a Laotian major talking nervous Americans onto their drop run. "What the hell is going on down there," asked one nervous pilot, seeing the bursting rounds from a Communist mortar.

"It's all right, come on in," the Lao major radioed calmly. Some of the C123s missed the drop zone but the last aircraft put its load of lots of 200 105 mm. howitzer ammunition on the center of the zone — and Lao troops whooped it up.

Other American crewmen are drawing more dangerous assignments.

One helicopter pilot said he been landing Lao commandos. "right on top of Pathet Lao command posts" under automatic gun fire.

continued

The weather and mountains, however, kill more American crewmen than the Communists do, sources say.

It is not known how many American crewmen have died in the past decade during such operations, though at least two died in the past few weeks.

Although correspondents unofficially have been on the arms flights, the curtain of secrecy is likely to remain on the operation. Informed sources say CIA officials bear heavily in mind the political climate in the United States concerning U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia.

They fear publicity could cause a public outcry to cease these operations, though they are successful and small compared to North Vietnamese operations in Laos.

Other Americans here, however, want the American involvement to be revealed arguing that public approval would come once the need for a scope of America's operations here was explained.

4 Jan 1970

Laos Is at War— But Vientiane Yawns

By WILLIAM WARREN

VIENTIANE, LAOS.

IF the Congressional subcommittee looking into United States involvement in Laos had paid a visit to this capital city in the guise of ordinary tourists, its members might have come away with at least two unexpected impressions. First of all, after a few days in Vientiane—which a British diplomat once described as “a rather sordid Garden of Eden”—they might well have concluded that, far from being at war, Laos isn't even in a state of particular unrest. Second, they might have decided that not only is there no widespread American involvement, there are practically no Americans here at all.

A closer inspection would alter both conclusions, but the fact remains that at first, or even second, sight, Vientiane hardly seems a city with the enemy quite literally at the gates—a unit of Pathet Lao soldiers passed the night within two kilometers of the city limits not long ago. Their side controls the entire eastern half of the country, which includes the areas bordering on North and South Vietnam. The Government forces control the main towns and villages to the west, and the Mekong River Valley.

The seat of Prince Souvanna Phouma's Government, Vientiane is the administrative capital of the country, as distinct from the royal capital at Luang Prabang; and from news dispatches on its strategic and political importance, one could easily imagine it as a teeming national center on the order of Bangkok or, at any rate, Kuala Lumpur. In fact, it is the smallest capital in Asia (about 130,000 is the population figure usually given, but no census has ever been taken, either of the city or of the country), and by all odds the most somnolent. Residents claim it is now undergoing a boom period, which to judge from past accounts may well be true; but in Laos, booms, like most other things, tend to be muted, and it is hard to see Vientiane's in the same light as those being enjoyed (or suf-

fered) by certain cities across the Mekong River in Thailand.

Apart from the peculiarities of Laotian temperament, one reason for this is undoubtedly the absence of the obvious American influence so evident in Thai centers of U.S. military activity like Korat, Ubol and Udorn Thani, all of which are relatively close to Laos on the other side of the river. In those places, the influence is all-pervasive, and for anyone who knew them in the old days it has rendered them almost unrecognizable. The streets are bustling with American traffic and lined with bars, pizza shops and massage parlors bearing American names, and the Americans themselves, both servicemen and dependents, are much in evidence everywhere.

VIENTIANE, on the other hand, for all its importance in the politics of Southeast Asia, has remained substantially what it was before any newspaper editor ever heard of it: a leisurely, slightly rundown French colonial town built on the site of an ancient capital to administer a remote country that had (and has) few roads, no railways and a population described fondly by one observer as “the least urgent souls on earth.”

An American who came here in the mid-fifties, as part of what might be called the advance guard, summed up the atmosphere of the capital as “tranquillity just this side of Rip Van Winkle,” and claimed its principal activities to be “picknicking on Sunday, watching the sun set over the Mekong and playing badminton in the front yard.” The pace has undeniably picked up since, but it is still a long way from being hectic, and the dominant mood is still a gentle mixture of French decadence and Laotian distaste for unseemly displays of activity.

The cuisine in the better restaurants is, or aims at being, French, and if the menus include curiosities like hamburgers, the offer is made very discreetly, near the end. There are numerous *pâtisseries* selling deli-

cious French bread, but only one or two small places brazen enough even to attempt a pizza. At night, the prostitutes along the Mekong embankment murmur not “Hey, Joe,” but “*Monsieur, un moment, s'il vous plait.*” If there is a Coca-Cola sign in the entire downtown area, it is remarkably well concealed.

As in every other part of Asia today, Japanese automobiles predominate, but if it isn't a Datsun or a Toyota weaving in and out of the pedicabs on Rue Samsenthai, it's more likely to be a Citroën than a Ford. In the bar of the Hotel Lane Xang, Vientiane's largest, one encounters a considerable variety of nationalities, ranging from Czech to Indian, but very rarely an American, outside a few embassy types and an occasional tourist straying from Thailand.

WHAT makes all this somewhat extraordinary is that there are, by official count (which most people here regard as very conservative), slightly more than 2,000 Americans, including dependents, in Laos, and most of them are in Vientiane. The majority of these are supposedly working for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), an organization that in Laos includes military as well as other kinds of aid, though many of them undoubtedly have duties not covered in official job descriptions. Open military assistance by outsiders was prohibited by the Geneva Accords of 1962, which permitted only the French military mission to remain, but neither the Government nor the Pathet Lao has ever taken this very seriously.

The American Embassy in Vientiane, which has by far the largest staff of any of the foreign embassies and a telephone book thicker than the one for all of Laos, admits to about 70 “assistant military attachés.” In addition, an indeterminate

continued

number of the local Americans are either C.I.A. or employees of the agency, which has taken over many of the functions of the former military representatives. The C.I.A. finances, or is generally believed to finance, both Air America (207 Americans officially employed) and Continental Air Charter (73 American employees), on whose planes supplies and personnel are flown to landing strips all over the country.

Though there are no outward signs of the American military presence on the streets of Vientiane itself — not

even an occasional army vehicle—there is a good deal of activity at the airport: big-bellied transport planes for dropping supplies up-country and a large number of helicopters and two-man trainer planes. (There is even more of this sort of thing to be seen at the tranquil little royal capital of Luang Prabang, to which American supply planes frequently fly direct from Thai bases.)

And, up-country, there is a sizable group of other Americans, not included in any embassy count, whose job is the arming, training and paying of an irregular "*Armée Clandestine*," composed mostly of tough, highly individualistic Meo hill tribesmen who are regarded as more reliable fighters against the Pathet Lao than the regular Government forces.

Whether one accepts the official or unofficial figures for the number of Americans at present in Laos, it is still, proportionately, as large as the number stationed in many of those cities that have been so dramatically transformed in Thailand.* Moreover, American aid to Laos, in terms of the size of the population, has been greater than that extended to any other Asian country, and normally aid is accompanied not only by personnel but also by culture.

IN the opinion of the European residents of Vientiane, three factors probably account for the American non-presence. The first, proudly proclaimed by the French group, is that their own impact—through some 54 years of colonial rule and later of strong cultural influence—has been too powerful to dissolve under anything less than the kind of super-American pres-

sure that has been brought to bear on Saigon. Laos was a particular favorite with intellectual French expatriates, who came and went native here with more abandon than in either Cambodia or Vietnam. A large number settled down permanently, many with

*The Senate and House, reflecting the strong sentiment in Congress that the legislative branch should reassert its role in foreign policy, recently incorporated into a defense appropriations bill a provision that none of the funds "shall be used to finance the introduction of American ground troops into Laos or Thailand."

Laotian wives, and formed the core of the sizable present-day community; in addition, there are French cultural and information centers, a large French military mission, French-operated schools and an active embassy that is the unquestioned pacesetter in Vientiane's social life.

The second factor is simply that, however large the controversial American military involvement in Laos may be, most of it is aerial and most of the men concerned are not stationed in Laos at all. They fly from bases in Thailand, and whatever cultural impact they may have is there. In Laos, their impact is in the form of bombs, which fall on Pathet Lao strongholds in reportedly huge quantities, but out of earshot of Vientiane.

Finally, those Americans who undeniably are here live, for the most part, in a world that physically as well as psychologically is singularly isolated from the daily life of Vientiane. The majority live in one or another of several large housing compounds that have been built for them in the past few years by USAID. The largest of these, a creation that is the object of endless marvel, amusement and occasional ridicule among other Western residents, is called, with military simplicity, KM-6, because it happens to be six kilometers from Vientiane.

KM-6 is a remarkably faithful replica of an American suburb, complete with straight, clearly marked streets, modern houses with clipped lawns, a 10-grade American-style school, a softball diamond, a sewage system and dependa-

ble supplies of electricity and water—all of which are novelties in Vientiane. Its families are kept occupied during off-duty hours with activities that include twice-nightly showings of movies, bingo parties, cook-outs, game days and, of course, the cocktail parties and dinners that are such a feature of suburban life back home. "No wonder they don't come into town," a British resident remarked recently. "They don't have any time."

EVEN if the Americans were fully integrated into Vientiane's life, though, it's at least debatable whether they would have a very profound effect, for the capital has shown an exceptional aptitude for absorbing all sorts and races of people without dis-

turbing its ambience. Ever since Laos first attracted the attention of the world, an incredible assortment of foreigners has been flocking to it to help solve its numerous social, economic and political problems. Indeed, even before then, non-Laotian, non-French faces were not exactly unfamiliar.

However charmed they were by the carefree atmosphere of the place, the French were forced to conclude that somebody had to work *sometime* and the Laotians were plainly disinclined to do so. (According to the English writer Norman Lewis, who traveled extensively through Indochina, "It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work more than is necessary," a delightful attitude certainly, but not one that eased the burden of colonial administration.)

The sharp, clever Vietnamese were therefore brought in to do what had to be done, such as cooking and collecting taxes and joining the ubiquitous Chinese and Indians who had traditionally taken care of what commerce there was. Today, these three races still own and operate practically every shop, restaurant and trading company in Vientiane, a fact that has given them economic control of the city and also earned them a sleepy but palpable resentment from the natives.

But it was in the fifties and early sixties that the really exotic foreigners started pouring into the capital. At the

Geneva Conference on Indochina in 1954, the world in general became aware for the first time that there was a country called Laos (the "s" was a gift from the French; in the native language it is called Lao) and that it was embroiled in a dangerous little war between the legal Government and Vietminh-backed insurgents who called themselves the Pathet Lao, which means simply "Lao country."

The Pathet Lao won official recognition as a reality at Geneva, as well as control of two provinces on the North Vietnamese border, and soon afterward Laos was plunged into the state of semicrisis in which it has lived ever since. Governments in Vientiane have come and gone, sometimes peacefully, as when the durable Prince Souvanna Phouma resigned in 1958 in the face of objections to his policy of trying to bring the

Pathet Lao into the Government; sometimes violently, as when, in August, 1960, an unknown captain in the Second Parachute Battalion named Kong Le staged a revolt against the pro-American Government and took control of the capital, only to be dislodged and driven into the provinces the following December by the U.S.-backed forces of General Phoumi Nosavan.

Yet another Geneva conference was called in 1962, this time with the Laotian problem as the main issue. Fourteen nations attended, including the U.S., Russia, Communist China, Thailand, and North and South Vietnam, all of whom ultimately signed an agreement calling for a coalition government under Souvanna Phouma in Vientiane and the immediate departure of all foreign military personnel with the exception of the French. The idea was to make all of Laos "neutralist," a term that both Kong Le and Souvanna Phouma favored; and though in theory this idea is still in force, in fact it lasted only as long as it took the various delegates to fly home from Geneva and think of less obvious methods of intervention.

WHILE all this was going on, numerous strangers were discovering the charms of Vientiane. There were the

course, which increased in both numbers and importance as international interest in Laos grew, and whose ambassadors (particularly those of the big powers like the U.S., England and Russia) dispensed advice to the Government with a freedom that is probably unique in modern Asian politics. Owing to the suddenness of their interest, there were certain housing problems at first—in 1956, the British Embassy was a rather flimsy shack in the middle of a swampy field—but they quickly settled in and established more durable quarters.

There was the International Control Commission, composed of Canadians, Indians and Poles, who were supposed to supervise the off-and-on truce between the Government and the rebel Pathet Lao. There was the United Nations, which sent a stream of representatives from countries as remote from Laos as Sweden, Italy, Tunisia, Argentina and Switzerland to look into Laotian affairs. Other countries less remote, like Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, Japan and both Chinas, also sent people.

When the truce broke down, as it did almost as regularly as Vientiane's electric supply, armies of journalists descended on the city and, from the bar of the Constellation Hotel, tried to write about battles that nobody seemed to know much about—a surrealistic task that led a reporter to announce that when he came to write a book about his experiences, one chapter would be entitled, "I Was a Pathet Lao Battalion."

AS interest in Laos grew, aid of various kinds flowed in, either to influence the outcome of the war or, more humanely, to alter some of the depressing statistics of the country: the poorest communications, the lowest life expectancy and the lowest literacy rate in all of Southeast Asia. It was to Laos that the late Dr. Tom Dooley came in search of a place to become the American Dr. Albert Schweitzer and, as everyone knows, found it.

Finally, an assortment of dubious world travelers suddenly became aware of the general permissiveness of the place and of the interesting fact that gold and opium were

dinarily cheap.

While the Laotian political situation was settling down to a sort of chronic crisis, a good many of these visitors settled down, too, with the result that Vientiane today, whether or not it shows it, must qualify as one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Asia. For example, there are close to a dozen separate aid organizations with their headquarters and staffs, including the Dooley Foundation, the Japanese Overseas Volunteers, the Brit-

ish Voluntary Service Organization, Operation Brotherhood (Filipino), USAID, the Peace Corps, the International Red Cross, the Catholic Relief Services, various agencies of the U.N. and an international Protestant group called World Vision.

In addition, Vientiane has 15 foreign embassies and three consulates, representing, among others, both North and South Vietnam and Communist China. It might be thought that the two Vietnams would raise serious social problems, particularly in view of the fact that the North Vietnamese Ambassador is at present the dean of the diplomatic corps, but such is not the case, according to a reliable source. The two are frequently in attendance at the same functions, and if they are not precisely cordial on these occasions, neither are they hostile; "How could you be, in Vientiane?" asked one veteran partygoer.

The Chinese Ambassador offers no social threats at all; he went home for "reorientation" two years ago and hasn't been heard from since. The Chinese Embassy, a shuttered, silent place, is run by the chargé d'affaires and, in the opinion of local observers, is kept going mainly as a convenient center from which to direct various clandestine activities in Thailand.

There is also, theoretically at least, a representative of the Pathet Lao's political organization, the Neo Lao Haksat, which maintains two residences across from the morning market. The Pathet Lao were given seats in the 1962 coalition Government but refused to take them. The delegates stayed around until

1964, when they left Vientiane; the residences, guarded by Pathet Lao soldiers, are kept for occasional visits by emissaries from Prince Souphanouvong, the leader of the Communist forces, who is the half-brother of the Prime Minister, Souvanna Phouma.

The enemy clearly retains a keen interest in its property, however. Last September, it protested vigorously when the Public Works Department announced its intention to build a wall around the property and also to repair the street in front. The Pathet Lao claimed the wall would tend to isolate them from the life of the city and that in working on the street the Government's steamrollers might damage their vegetable gardens. The quarrel reached the point where troops were called out to brandish guns at the guards, but it gradually petered out. The wall is still un-built.

VIENTIANE'S rather tolerant attitude toward cold-war politics, as reflected in its diplomatic community, is also shown in the fact that it is the principal point of entry and departure to and from Hanoi, which is the chief supplier of the Pathet Lao. The International Control Commission flies frequent planes to the North Vietnamese capital, and most of the journalists and peace-movement leaders who have been granted visas have come through here. Similarly, when American prisoners of war are released, Vientiane is usually their first view of the outside world. The regular European community of the capital pays little attention to these comings and goings except when they involve a celebrity like writer Mary McCarthy, for whom the French Embassy gave a reception. Representatives from the American Embassy attended, of course.

A couple of years ago, the more or less official foreigners of Vientiane were joined, unexpectedly, by a small army of hippies from Europe and America. To them, Laos seemed to offer the paradise it did to the early French: marijuana grows wild, the climate is benign, and the Laotians are as tolerant about sex as they are about most things. With their beards and beads

and flowers, they came in large numbers across the Thai border—the only border by which it is possible to enter Laos by land nowadays—and settled in a section of the city called Dong Palane. The less spiritual-minded opened a colorful string of bars, the leading one of which was the Third Eye, offering cheap food, pot, rock music and psychedelic lighting achieved by cutting holes in umbrellas that twirled on the ceiling.

Somewhat to the regret of Vientiane's other Westerners, for whom Dong Palane became a favorite place to repair after receptions, the hippies overestimated local permissiveness. Exactly why the authorities decided to clamp down is still not clear; some say it was the drugs, others that it was simply the long hair; whatever the cause, a few were expelled and most of the others apparently got discouraged and followed of their own accord.

Not, however, without certain difficulties: the Thai had gotten wary of the flower children long before and refused to let some of them re-enter at Nong Khai on the other side of the Mekong. Since the Laotians now refused to let them back in, they seemed doomed to a no-man's land between the two countries until some of the Vientiane embassies worked out an agreement to allow them to pass quickly through to Bangkok and out—where to, nobody is sure. Possibly to forestall any future invasion of the sort, the Laotian Embassy in Bangkok now requires prospective tourists to present a letter of recommendation from their embassies along with their visa application.

The "strip" at Dong Palane continues to offer amusements, but much of its former flavor is gone in the opinion of old customers. The Third Eye, facing reality, has gone respectable and now has a sign proclaiming, "All drinks one dollar," and slot machines that take nickels and dimes; it's still owned by the American Negro who founded it, and it still features Vietnamese rock bands, but the atmosphere is almost, if not quite, decorous.

FOR the less pleasant aspects of life in Vientiane—the aspects, that is, that have brought it prominence—one has to look carefully, listen to the stories in the Constellation bar, or read the Bangkok papers, which regularly report grim events that go largely unmentioned at the embassy dinners and receptions. According to these reports, for instance, the military hospitals of Vientiane are crowded with wounded soldiers from obscure battles that do not find their way into official announcements, some 80,000 refugees have fled from battle zones this year, and the Pathet Lao have control of every road leading from the capital to the provinces so that it is, in fact, isolated except by air from the rest of the country.

Some of the European diplomats consider such reports exaggerated—they remind one of how hard it is to be sure of anything in a country as deficient in communications as Laos—and a few even scoff at the notion that road travel outside of Vientiane is unsafe. "You can go anywhere you want by car," one said not long ago, adding, with a shrug, "Of course, there is a certain element of risk involved."

Despite such assurances, very few Westerners do travel by road, and of those who have tried it in the recent past, several have discovered that the risk was considerable. Three young American AID workers were stopped by the Pathet Lao and summarily executed not far from Vientiane four months ago, and a group of French travelers met the same fate a few months before.

An American AID employee, Loring Waggoner, who lived with his wife and family 70 miles from the capital, escaped with his life, but not without a harrowing experience. When the Pathet Lao overran his house one night, he and his wife and two children managed to hide in a tunnel they had prudently built under the kitchen, where they stayed all night while the soldiers roamed about the house smashing things and looking for him. (Their deci-

sion to eliminate him, apparently, arose from a belief that he was a military intelligence agent.)

As a result of incidents like these, Americans in Vientiane are discouraged, if not actually forbidden, from going more than 15 miles by road outside the city, and after dark even that limit is considered an unnecessary risk. The effect, on at least some, is claustrophobic.

"I envy you people in Thailand," an American girl told a visitor from Bangkok recently. "When you want to get away for a weekend, you can just get in a car and go. Here, it reminds me of the Congo, where I used to be stationed—like being on a very small island. I think that's why so many of us stay in the compounds. If you're going to be trapped, you might as well be trapped in comfort."

In addition to being just outside the city, the Pathet Lao are generally assumed to be inside it, too, in the form of agents and sympathizers, though they have never resorted to the kind of terrorist tactics so common in Saigon. Along with them are numerous other intelligence agents of various nationalities and political persuasions, giving Vientiane quite possibly the largest per capita spy population in Asia. "I suspect everybody," a British diplomat said, firmly, "and I think I'm usually right."

It is difficult to get accurate information on the military situation without actually going into the countryside, which few nonmilitary people do. In an atmosphere in which the war is as much abstraction as reality, most of the older diplomatic residents are inclined to regard both Government and Pathet Lao announcements with distinct cynicism.

There are times when the war suddenly becomes more than just a political abstraction and when a wave of jitters passes through the city. The murder of the three young Americans was one such time, and so was the ambush of the French travelers—the latter particularly so, since the Europeans in the capital had previously taken it for granted that Pathet Lao hostility was directed at Americans rather

than at them as well. (The French, it is said, were as surprised as they were horrified by the incident.)

TENSION, however, is a difficult emotion to sustain in Laos, and in the languid atmosphere of Vientiane, war, death and espionage quickly assume an air of unreality and, not unfrequently, of farce. Though the Laotians occasionally seem to be the least visible inhabitants of their capital city, their distinctive philosophy permeates it; and after a few days here it is hard to reconcile what one has heard with what one sees.

The shell-scarred remains of villas and government buildings left by the savage fighting of the counter coup that drove Capt. Kong Le and his paratroopers out in December, 1960, have become picturesquely enshrouded by tropical creepers and could easily be the ruins of some of the 80-odd ancient temples scattered about the city. The small, cheerful soldiers strolling about in red berets and camouflage uniforms seem on their way to a temple fair, or perhaps to a fancy-dress ball, rather than to a battle in which they might become one of those vague, uncertain statistics. Even torture, which, according to local gossip, is not unknown in Vientiane's jails for captured Pathet Lao, has a rather *outré* flavor; a favored method of extracting information, it is said, is with the use of old-fashioned phonograph needles and, as one resident says, "Where else on earth but Laos could you even find old-fashioned phonograph needles?"

A quite typical example of how things are done in Vientiane came recently when one of the Pathet Lao soldiers guarding the empty headquarters of the Neo Lao Haksat decided to defect to the Government camp. (More than 10 of the guards, no doubt corrupted by their surroundings, have done so in the past five years.) He did, but his defection was no hair-raising escape by dark across barbed wire so common to Western cold-war melodrama. At high noon, he simply laid down his rifle, hailed a passing pedicab and was carried in leisurely fashion off to police headquarters. ■